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Alabama, 1763-1891



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HISTORY  
OF THE  
PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL  
Church in Alabama  
1763-1891

BY  
WALTER C. WHITAKER  
Rector of Christ Church, Tuscaloosa, Ala.

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“Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn.”—*Isaiah 51:1.*

“To stir you up by putting you in remembrance.”

—*I St. Peter 1:13.*

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TO THE  
CHURCHMEN OF ALABAMA.

~ 1808  
~~68479~~





## PREFACE.

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THE author has no apology to make for writing and publishing this history. He feels that an excuse must, from its very nature, be either in vain or unnecessary. The book itself must be his justification or his condemnation.

He has of course written, as every man must write, from his own point of view. While claiming that it is his right to do this, he is not unaware that there are other points of view, and to their occupants he cheerfully concedes the right to criticise his sense of proportion.

It should be borne in mind that this is a history, not of bishops, priests, or parishes, but of a diocesan Church. Hence only those personal and parochial records appear that set forward the author's purpose. Matters of detail have been unhesitatingly sacrificed to comprehensiveness of statement.

To those who have furnished much interesting information and many valuable documents, especially

to BISHOP WILMER and the REV. R. H. COBBS, D. D.,  
the author thus publicly expresses his appreciation of  
their kindness.

TUSKALOOSA, ALA.,

*Easter Monday, 1898.*



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PART FIRST.

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# THE ACEPHALOUS CHURCH.



# HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN ALABAMA.

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## CHAPTER I.

### POTEST TOLERARI.

THE beginning of the record carries us down to the waters of the Gulf and back to the sixth decade of the last century.

The French and Indian War had just ceased, and in the ensuing division of territory France had ceded to England the fort and village of Mobile. The settlement here was sixty years old. Except the garrison few Englishmen ever came to the village, and they that did come fell under the dominant French influence.

The Governor, Robert Farmer, a man whose range of reading was so great that he could compare Pontiac with Mithridates, and refresh himself in hours of weariness with Montesquieu, and who, in his correspondence with the French governor of New Orleans, evinced thorough familiarity with both the Salic Law and Magna Charta, was withal a notoriously dissolute man. His strong mentality and weak morality yielded



their accustomed fruits in his subordinates, and the few villagers and more numerous soldiery, copying the weaker traits of their commander, were strangers to virtue and familiars of dissipation and debauchery.

A person calling himself a clergyman of the Church of England lounged about the place and occasionally held public services. The people seriously questioned his ordination, of which he gave no proof. His character, however, they did not question. As a good priest is the best of men, so a bad priest is the worst of men; and this reputed clergyman, drifting among the outposts of civilization, was so horribly ungodly and lascivious that even the hardened soldiers and camp-followers of Mobile held him in detestation.

It was to this morally desolate place that the Rev. Samuel Hart, of Charleston, S. C., received license to minister in 1764. The missionary spirit was none too active in those days, even among the missionaries themselves, and Mr. Hart's zeal was not kindled when he found the field so sterile and the society so uncongenial. He soon determined to return to more civilized regions.

But before his departure he took occasion, at a general congress held with the Indians, to preach them a lengthy and quite dogmatic sermon, which the interpreter explained sentence by sentence. The Indian chief was very attentive. After dinner he asked Mr. Hart whereabouts lived the Great Warrior, God Almighty, of whom he talked so much, and desired to know if He were a friend of "Brother George" across the water. This question started Mr.

Hart into another long discourse, wherein he expatiated on God's being and attributes, and sought to enlighten the dusky warrior on the divine transcendence and immanence; but he was utterly unable to impart any idea of his subject-matter to his hearer. Finally his verbosity wearied the chief, who solemnly took him by the hand, and, filling a glass with rum, concluded the interview much to his own satisfaction, by saying: "Beloved man, I will always think well of this friend of ours, God Almighty, of whom you tell me so much; and so let us drink his health." Then he drank the rum and went back to his native forests.

After a sojourn in Mobile of about a year Mr. Hart saw the growth of the village seriously retarded and its very existence rendered problematic by a fearful scourge introduced from Jamaica by a British regiment, and nourished by the dissolute habits of the population; and, in 1765, he returned to Charleston.

After this no attempt was made to plant the Church in Alabama until 1826; a single service held in Florence two years before by the Rev. William Wall not being followed up by either the clergyman or the people.

In the intervening sixty years Alabama's population had grown to three hundred thousand. The dignity of statehood had been conferred on the territory. Material prosperity had greatly increased. Manners and morals, subject to new influences, showed marked improvement. But nowhere was the Church visible in diocese, parish, or mission. Methodist and Bap-

tist houses of worship appeared, and here and there Presbyterian, but the Church of Apostolic Succession was without a single minister or congregation in the entire state.

It would be idle to say that no blame attaches to the Bishops, clergy and laity in the established dioceses of the older states; and yet these do not deserve the entire burden of censure heaped upon them even by the Churchfolk of today. The bulk of population in the Tennessee Valley came down from Tennessee and Kentucky wherein Churchmen were few and far between. In Middle Alabama a considerable proportion were Churchmen; and so in Mobile. But for thirty years (1783-1813) South Alabama was in the hands of the Spanish, who allowed no public religious exercises other than those of the Holy Roman Church. In this district Anglican Christianity was not permitted to show its head. Then, when in 1813 the territory passed back into the hands of English-speaking people and was for the first time incorporated in the United States, the Church had to contend, not only in Alabama, but all through the Union, with an unfavorable popular prejudice, of which not sufficient account is ordinarily taken by those who comment on her present numerical weakness in this country.

Down to the Revolutionary War the Church in the colonies was distinctly Anglican in its customs and in its constitution. Every American clergyman was ordained in England, and the majority were born there; so that, though living in America, their sympathies

were naturally with the mother in her disputes with the daughter. Although their sense of justice caused many of them to side with the rebelling colonies in the struggle for independence and induced well-nigh all to cast in their fortunes with the new-born nation when the war was over, yet they were regarded with suspicion. It was well known that the Protestant Episcopal Church was an offshoot of the Church of England. Practically the Church of England was the English people and the English Government. An organic body in this country that derived its authority from England, and that had been, through its chief official representatives in England, in hostility towards a national uprising, was entirely out of touch with American ideals and institutions, and deserved to be cast out and trodden under foot. It is true that some of the leading patriots were members of this despised body—George Washington, Patrick Henry, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Peyton Randolph, Robert Morris, Alexander Hamilton, Madison, Monroe, and Francis Scott Key, not to mention hundreds of others—but their membership was held to be an idiosyncrasy for which, in the light of their many virtues, they should not be too severely censured.

This prejudice, ignorant as is all prejudice, arose and flourished long before the open hostilities of the War of the Revolution began. By the end of the ensuing thirty years of peace with England it had begun to diminish, but the second conflict, the War of 1812, fanned it into brighter flame than ever. The utmost that zealous Americanism would grant the Church



was "Potest Tolerari." Those men were our grandfathers. Their bitter prejudice still washes at our feet after two generations.

So the Church had to await her time and opportunity. Here and there, throughout the territory of Alabama, a few Church families, emigrants from the states, were thrown together, and irregularly held lay-services, supplemented at long intervals by the chance visit of some clerical relative, friend, or itinerant. Many of these early Churchmen became discouraged at the apparent forgetfulness of their Mother and united themselves with sectarian bodies, chiefly Methodist and Baptist, whose noble, self-sacrificing preachers kept in the vanguard of civilization, alongside, and sometimes ahead of, the gambling-den and the whisky-hell. But here and there were forming nuclei of the large congregations that are now found in Mobile, Montgomery, Selma, Birmingham, and Huntsville, and of parishes elsewhere that are only awaiting an uncrystalized material on which to work.

## CHAPTER II.

### ORGANIZATION.

SUCH was the condition of affairs when in November, 1826, the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Church, then five years old, directed the Rev. Robert Davis "to visit the State of Alabama and advance the interests of the Society and religion" there. Shortly after his appointment Mr. Davis set out on what was then a long and tedious journey; but being detained on his way by illness he did not reach Tuscaloosa, his objective point, till the winter of 1827.

Tuscaloosa was then a small village, eight years of age, and with a population of not more than five or six hundred souls. But within the past year it had been made the State capital, and a considerable population was certain in the near future. At any rate, Mr. Davis thought that with the capital as his center of operations he could the better extend the influence and ministrations of the Church into other villages and hamlets of the interior. Here, therefore, he remained several months, ministering constantly to the half-dozen Church families that had moved in, but apparently making no missionary excursions. On January 7, 1828, Christ Church parish was organized, and the building of a parish church undertaken.

Whether Mr. Davis had any idea of remaining in

Tuskaloosa is doubtful. He was not sent out to do missionary work, but was simply a collecting agent of the Missionary Society, working on a commission of ten per cent. of his gross collections. He left Tuskaloosa on March 25th of this year, 1828; and his subsequent demand on the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society for his commission on the seventeen hundred dollars subscribed towards the parish church explains in part the zeal that he manifested for the erection of a house of worship.

Mr. Davis' departure was followed by cessation of effort on the part of the newly-organized parish; but in February, 1829, a newly-appointed missionary, the Rev. William H. Judd, arrived from New York, and infused new life into the project. Mr. Judd lived only six months after he came to Alabama, but his success was marked, the church building being almost completed at the time of his death. He left the congregation in a flourishing condition, and not only flourishing but united—a fact worthy of note, for there were not thirty communicants in the parish.

Meanwhile another clergyman was working in Alabama. Three weeks before Mr. Davis had reached Tuskaloosa, the Rev. Henry A. Shaw had taken charge of the church families in Mobile. Here in 1822 a few Churchmen had built the first non-Romanist place of worship in the entire district wrested from the Spanish nine years before. For three years union services were held in this building, ministers being engaged without reference to denomination. In 1825 this arrangement ceased, and the Churchmen organ-

ized Christ Church parish. A Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Murdoch Murphy, continued to officiate as the parish minister until Mr. Shaw's arrival in December, 1827. The original Christ Church must have been a very small, cheap, and unsubstantial structure, for in 1834 the rector complained that it was "too small and very old," although the parish numbered only twenty-eight communicants, and the building had been used only twelve years.

In 1830 the Church in Alabama, and especially the parish of Mobile, received some encouragement from a visit of the Rt. Rev. Thomas C. Brownell, Bishop of Connecticut. Dr. Brownell had been requested by the Domestic Missionary Board to make a visitation to all the Southern States not then organized into dioceses, and in pursuance of this request he visited Mobile in January, 1830.

On the 25th day of that month he presided over the Primary Convention, at which the diocese was organized. According to Bishop Brownell's report the convention was composed of "the principal Episcopalians of the city and from other parts of the state." But the delegates from outside the place of meeting were few. The state was very deficient in transportation facilities. More than a month was required to make the journey by water from Demopolis or Montgomery to Mobile and return, and so miserable were the few rough country roads that penetrated the vast stretches of pine forests and the dangerous morasses of the Mobile river and its tributaries that few cared to use them. Therefore the Primary Convention was slimly attended. Besides the Bishop, the local min-



ister (the Rev. Henry Shaw), and the Rev. William Richmond, a New York clergyman, the only other cleric present was the Rev. Albert A. Muller, who had recently been transferred from Mississippi and was stationed at Tuscaloosa. Ten or twelve laymen were in attendance, the majority from Mobile. The parishes of Mobile and Tuscaloosa, and the congregation at Greensboro, which had just been organized by Mr. Muller, were represented. A constitution was adopted, a Standing Committee was appointed, and steps were taken to secure a union with the diocese of Mississippi and the congregations of Louisiana. The Convention then adjourned to meet again in Mobile on May 12 of the same year.

At the time set lay delegates appeared from the same three congregations as before, but Mr. Shaw was the only clergyman present, Mr. Muller apparently not caring to spend two months of the same year on the Warrior and Tombigbee rivers. The Convention, without transacting any business, adjourned to meet at Tuscaloosa on January 3, 1831, hopeful that the accessibility of that place would allow a full attendance.

The hope was not disappointed. Although Mr. Muller sat in solitary clerical state, Mr. Shaw this time absenting himself, delegates from Mobile were present. Deputations attended also from Greensboro, and from Huntsville, whither a few Churchmen had removed. Ten souls constituted this Convention—a small number absolutely, but relatively six times larger than any Diocesan Council of the last decade.

A communication was received from the diocese of Mississippi asking the appointment of a committee of six, to meet the same number each from Mississippi and Louisiana, with a view to the formation out of the three bodies of "The Southwestern Diocese." As this request was the outcome of a resolution adopted at the Primary Convention of Alabama the year before, it was granted. The committee appointed consisted of the two clergy resident in the state, Chief Justice Abner S. Lipscomb and Mr. John Elliott of Mobile, and Messrs. J. M. Davenport and A. P. Baldwin of Tuscaloosa. Bishop Brownell was requested to continue in charge of the Church in Alabama, and to render such Episcopal service as might be required. A set of four canons was adopted by this Convention—probably the shortest code of laws ever in force in an American diocese.

We have seen that at this time parishes were established and organized in Mobile and Tuscaloosa, the metropolis and the capital, and that congregations had been gathered at Greensboro and Huntsville. A year or two later, Bishop Brownell made a journey of inspection through the state, and held services at Selma, Montgomery and Florence. These places were all small villages, but the Bishop deemed them favorable missionary soil.

No other congregations than these existed in Alabama when the General Convention of 1832 recognized Alabama as an autonomous diocese, and the weakness of the Church was so great that many deemed it idle that such action should have been taken.

There was little or no community of interest between the two clergymen. The Rev. Norman Pinney had succeeded the Rev. Mr. Shaw as rector of Christ Church, Mobile, but he was so much engrossed with his own parochial affairs that he did not appear at a Convention of the diocese till more than three years later.

Only Mr. Muller and nine laymen composed the Convention of 1832, one-half of whose membership was from Tuscaloosa, where the Convention was held. It was not an over-cheerful Convention. Earnest appeals to the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society were not heeded, though the Society was meanwhile supporting missionaries in Greece, where an orthodox branch of the Holy Catholic Church was already established. Pecuniary reasons influenced Mr. Muller, after two years of faithful service, to discontinue his monthly visits to Greensboro—a serious discouragement to this congregation, which had secured a lot and raised a considerable sum of money towards the erection of a church building. Huntsville was despondent at her failure to secure outside aid in building a house of worship. Liberality towards the Church did not keep pace with the increase of Churchmen's bank accounts.

Spiritual parsimony was most marked in the Tennessee Valley, which was now making great industrial progress. Here, in 1832, money enough was found to build, in Madison County, Alabama's first cotton factory, and to construct from Tuscumbia to Decatur the state's first railroad. Churchmen built

for themselves houses of cedar, while yet not even a tabernacle was erected to the glory of God.

In 1833 the Church's most faithful children were so disheartened that they did not even attempt to hold the Convention, which was to have met at Tuscaloosa. Mr. Muller had left this place because of very scandalous lapses from religion and morality that subsequently resulted in his deposition from the sacred ministry, and the congregation which he left behind him was gradually and surely melting away. Only at Mobile, throughout this dark biennium, did any vigor remain, and even there the communicants were a mere handful.

## CHAPTER III.

### A HEADLESS BODY.

THE General Convention of 1832, which admitted the diocese of Alabama into union with itself, took other action which served to arouse Alabama Churchmen from their apathy by giving them something to do, to think of, and to hope for. A special canon was enacted allowing the dioceses of Alabama and Mississippi and the churches in Louisiana to proceed to the formation of that "Southwestern Diocese," which the Churchmen of the three states deemed the only practicable scheme for ensuring constant Episcopal oversight.

Then the general Board of Missions determined to send a missionary to Alabama. The selection of the Rev. Caleb S. Ives was providential. He knew where to take hold, and how to inspire hope and enthusiasm. His first work was to gather together the congregational fragments in what are now Greene, Hale, and Marengo counties. At Greensboro the congregation, which had been organized by Mr. Muller on March 14, 1830, and had scattered, sheep without a shepherd, now numbered six families. But as the mighty influence of Bethlehem Ephrata depended not on its numerical strength, so again, on Christmas Eve, this time in Alabama, was born a Christ-spirit; and on December 24, 1833, the little congregation, stirred by Mr. Ives' zeal, aroused itself



from sleep, formed the parish of "St. Paul's," and went to work in the Master's vineyard. The missionary seed dropped that Christmas Eve has borne fruit a hundred-fold, and today Greensboro is a chief center of missionary activity in the diocese.

But not even in Greensboro was it plain sailing for the Church in those days. If Mr. Ives encouraged others he often faced difficulties and met with disappointments. "The doctrines and services of the Church," he wrote from Greensboro, in 1835, "so far as can be ascertained, are favorably received; and the prospects for building up the Church here are as flattering as could be expected under existing circumstances. The place has been too long neglected, which, together with the abortive attempt once made to establish the Church here, requires much labor, fidelity, and perseverance to place her even on an equal footing with the other denominations."

On Sunday, December 15, 1833, a week after the first service that he had held at Greensboro, Mr. Ives officiated at Demopolis, where he found a few Church families. This was the first Church service ever held at Demopolis. In the following month Mr. Ives returned to Demopolis, and on January 31, 1834, organized Trinity parish. In this month also he gathered a congregation at a point nine miles southwest of Greensboro and on the road to Demopolis, and here, on April 19, 1834, organized the parish of "St. John's in the Prairies."\*

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\*This parish has been defunct since 1865, when the remnant of the congregation connected itself with St. Paul's, Greens-

In the following September, at Prairieville\* he established a congregation. Constantly did his field of labor broaden. Thoroughly did he cultivate all his rich territory. Abundantly did it respond to his endeavors.

The outlook was now becoming brighter for the whole diocese—what there was of it—and at the Convention which met in Mobile in January, 1835, Bishop Brownell, all three of the diocesan clergy, and delegates from Mobile, Tuskaloosa, Greensboro, and Demopolis, were in attendance. This Convention recommended to the next annual Convention a revised constitution, somewhat fuller and more explicit than its predecessor, and adopted a body of canons providing for the composition and guidance of subsequent Conventions and for the reception of clergymen into canonical residence in a parish. Through a fatal defect in the third canon it became possible for unbaptized men to sit in the diocesan Convention, and it was not necessary that a delegate to the General Convention, the highest deliberative and legislative body in the Church, should have received the Laying on of Hands. The clergy and six laymen were appointed deputies to the Convention soon to meet in New Orleans for the purpose of organizing the South-western Diocese.

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boro. The church building, a memorial of its first rector, the Rev. John Avery, D. D., who served the parish in 1836, was, in 1878, given to the congregation at Forkland, a neighboring village lying between the Tombigbee and Warrior rivers.

\*Afterwards Macon, and now Gallion.

We may here very properly conclude all reference to this scheme, fruitless so far as Alabama was immediately concerned.

The three states interested sent deputies to the Convention, which sat in New Orleans on March 4 and 5, 1835. Fifteen persons were present. The Convention put forth a declaration to the effect that it understood from the special canon of the General Convention, under which it was acting, that the new body, which they were about to organize, was not to be merely a confederation of three organisms, enjoying the benefits of the same Bishop and holding intercommunion only through him, but was to form one organic diocese. With this declaration as a basis the Southwestern Diocese was organized, a constitution was adopted, and a Bishop was elected. The choice fell upon Dr. Francis L. Hawks, rector of St. Thomas' Church, New York, and, with the possible exception of Stephen H. Tyng, the most powerful preacher of his generation. Dr. Hawks declined the office, and, while his declination caused much disappointment, it was doubtless well for the churches that he did not become their Bishop; for when, nine years later, Mississippi, acting for herself, called him to be her Bishop, and subsequently iterated the election, charges made against him at that time of being given to ungovernable bursts of temper and to financial irregularities appear to have been not without some foundation. At any rate his declination ended Alabama's connection with the new diocese, for the Church grew so rapidly in the next few months that the Diocesan Convention,

held in Mobile in 1836, passed resolutions affirming Alabama's withdrawal from the Southwestern Diocese and her intention to preserve her autonomy as an independent diocese.

The first clerical perversion in the diocese belongs to this period. The Rev. Norman Pinney, rector of Christ Church, Mobile, was the pervert. Even while at heart a Unitarian, he had taken the sacred vows of priesthood in a Church whose prescribed daily services required the minister to declare explicitly his belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ at least nineteen times in one day. For some time the Churchmen of Mobile had deemed his teaching unsound in its expressed or implied contravention of Creed and Articles, and rumor of this unsoundness finally reached Bishop Brownell's ears. As the ecclesiastical authority of the diocese of Alabama, the Bishop, in 1835, summoned Mr. Pinney to appear before him. He received from that minister's own lips a definite denial of belief in Christ as God. No hesitation was possible, and Mr. Pinney was promptly deposed from the sacred ministry. Mr. Pinney was an accomplished scholar, but he was not of magnetic mind, his personal following was not great, and his defection from the faith, followed by twenty years of school-teaching in Mobile, does not appear to have produced any evil effect either on the parish or on any individuals.

Mr. Pinney was succeeded as rector of Christ Church, Mobile, by the Rev. Samuel S. Lewis, who, removing thither from Tuscaloosa, shortly reported that his new parish numbered 114 communicants.

Mr. Lewis was succeeded at Tuscaloosa by the Rev. Andrew Matthews. The Rev. William Johnson took charge of the shepherdless little congregation at Montgomery, in December, 1835, and, after leading their devotions first in a Baptist and then in a Universalist place of worship, succeeded in building a neat brick church, the first St. John's Church of the town, and had it ready for consecration by Bishop Kemper on occasion of his visit to Montgomery in 1837. Wetumpka, then hopeful of being the chief city of the interior, soon owned a brick house of worship, built by the energetic efforts of the Rev. Robert G. Hays, who had come from Tennessee. Florence began to give evidence of that Church life which Bishop Brownell had predicted five years before, and shortly after the arrival of the Rev. Thomas A. Cook, from South Carolina, had, though with only eight communicants on the parish register, raised fifteen hundred dollars for a church building. Mr. Jacob Lorillard, of New York, transferred to the diocese six hundred and forty acres of land in Baldwin county for the support of the future Bishop, and to this gift were added subscriptions to the amount of \$4,050, raised by Mr. Ives, who had been compelled by pecuniary necessities to retire temporarily from parish work and devote himself to the more lucrative pursuit of school-teaching in Mobile, and who, while traveling in the interest of his school, found opportunity to solicit subscriptions to the Bishop's Fund. The Baldwin county land was sold ten years later for five hundred dollars. That nothing whatever was realized from



the subscriptions made to Mr. Ives, was due to a decade of financial stringency upon which the country was just entering.

The whole nation had given itself over to speculation, and values had become greatly inflated. In Alabama the appearances of prosperity were so flattering as to beguile tradesmen into an extension of purchases and credits, and planters into extravagant investments in lands and slaves. These delusive anticipations were not realized, and the people became deeply involved. The magnitude of this disaster is perceptible when we recall that before the first day of May, 1837, the failures of the year in New York City alone aggregated \$100,000,000, and in New Orleans, Alabama's chief market place, amounted to \$27,000,000. A run was made on the banks. Specie payment was suspended. The rapid depreciation of values to their normal size reduced many to poverty.

Although eight clergymen were now at work in the diocese, the general distress forbade all thought of the election of a Bishop. The few established parishes were pushed to the utmost to support their own ministers, without attempting, even by united effort, to support a Bishop. Bishop Brownell could not be expected to come from Connecticut as frequently as he was needed, for in those days the journey required nearer forty-eight days than forty-eight hours; and when he came he could not undertake the long journeys of exploration that are among the chief duties of a pioneer Bishop. Feeling that it was out of question for him longer to exercise Episcopal oversight of



the diocese, he delegated his duties as Provisional Bishop of Alabama to the Rt. Rev. James H. Otey, who had, only two years before, become Bishop of Tennessee. Bishop Otey gave what Episcopal supervision he could afford, and in 1836 made visitations at which he confirmed altogether about two-score persons. Two years later, at Bishop Otey's request, Bishop Kemper visited portions of the state, confirming about the same number and consecrating the Church buildings in Montgomery and the Prairies. These were the only visits that Alabama received from a Bishop during five years.

But it would not have sufficed had annual visitations been made. The diocese needed something more than an Episcopal confirming-machine that contents itself with visiting those parishes wherein classes await Confirmation; and, though it stumbled, and halted, and doubted sometimes, it knew what it needed. It needed a head to direct its spasmodic efforts to reach the spiritually deserted and famishing in those remote hamlets and sparsely settled neighborhoods that were a chief characteristic of a state yet in its minority. In plain words, it needed a resident Bishop. If it were to attempt the life of an exotic it would die.

Yet, thwarting every effort, there stood that grim and silent Cerberus—*Cerberus Ecclesiasticus*, with two heads substituted for the papal tiara—"six resident clergymen for a whole year previous to the election of a Bishop," and an "endowment of the Episcopate." That presbyters must be before Bishops in order of

time, is a proposition that would have impressed St. Paul very deeply, and possibly have occasioned another Epistle. That the Bishopric must be endowed before the Bishop may be selected, and that all care shall be taken to prevent the head from suffering even while the body may be dying, is doubtless a post-Apostolic tradition. It is a tradition, an heirloom of our Anglican ancestry; but in many minds it has all the force of Constitutions and Canons.

It took several years and much patience to root out this prejudice from the minds of some of the Clergy and laity of Alabama. In 1838, when the canonical sop of "six resident clergy" was ready to be thrown, the cry of the Committee on the State of the Church, "Let us but have the head that we so much need," was not met with even the common courtesy, "A resolution to that effect was introduced." The next year, when twelve clergy were at work in the state, the immediate election of a Bishop was staved off by the adoption of instructions to the Standing Committee to take a whole year to ascertain the condition of the Bishop's Fund, the resources of the diocese for the support of a Bishop, and the expediency of proceeding to an election. When this year had passed, the Convention of 1840 decided, after sharp debate, that the diocese had no canonical right to elect a Bishop. On what ground this decision was based is not known; in the diocese ten clergymen were at work, and seven of them had been in residence more than twelve months. Yet once again, in 1841, when there were eleven resident clergy and seventeen organ-

ized parishes, the old resolution came forward in its stereotyped form: "It is inexpedient to go into the election of a Bishop at the present Convention." Cause: "The supposed want of canonical right and the want of available means of supporting a Bishop at this time."

So passed the precious years of seed-time, forever irreclaimable, wasted away by short-sighted men, who would not elect a Bishop until they could ensure his dignity by making him comfortable.

Meanwhile some of the clergy were doing such missionary work as was possible, with the Church purely presbyterial and poorly articulated, and were preaching here and there, looking up the stray sheep, dropping seed from place to place, and nurturing it as trial of the soil's fruitfulness.\* Some of these attempts were successful, but many were the disappointments. Movements of population, crystalization of opposition, spiritual paralysis, are contingencies that the most sagacious eye cannot infallibly foresee and provide against. Prevision is especially short in young countries just opening their arms to immigration; and such a country was Alabama.

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\*Eufaula was thus visited in 1844 by the Rev. J. L. Gay, who set about gathering a congregation and establishing a parish. While the meeting for organization was in session, and the question of a name for the parish was under consideration, the stage rolled in from Columbus, bringing papers that told of the nomination of James K. Polk for President. One of the gentlemen present, Col. John L. Hunter, suggested that the parish be called St. James', and Mr., now ex-Senator, J. L. Pugh, seconded the motion, which prevailed unanimously.

Two examples will suffice to illustrate the uncertain outcome of missionary enterprise. One shall be an instance of failure, one of success. The former case shall be that of La Fayette, in East Alabama; the latter, Selma. The clergy were of equal zeal. The conditions were alike favorable. In neither case, apparently, was judgment at fault in the organizing of a congregation.

The church in La Fayette was founded in 1838 by the Rev. Thomas A. Cook. The village then had a population of about twelve hundred souls, and though in size equal only to the Auburn, Brewton, and Eutaw of today, was, on account of the small population of the state, of much greater relative importance than are these thriving villages. Within six months the minister reported eight communicants and a Sunday School of forty pupils, and was collecting funds for the building of what was to be Trinity Church. The beginning was auspicious; but in 1840 the sky had clouded over, and the report was full of despondency: "The present moment may be looked upon as the darkest page in the history of our enterprise. In all our demonstrations the people are neither hot nor cold; there is neither the voice of prayer nor praise, but a listless assent to anything. At present our Sunday School is not large; there are from twelve to twenty scholars." In 1841 a slight upward tendency was perceptible; but the community had been hard hit by the long-continued commercial depression, and the congregation worked with the listlessness of hope deferred. No further report was ever made from the

ill-fated parish. Only once, and that in 1846, did it receive the visit of a Bishop. Year after year the Finance Committee assessed "Trinity Church, La Fayette," first five, and then, after the election of a Bishop, fifty dollars, for diocesan expenses, but the assessment remained unpaid and accumulating year by year, and was ultimately remitted by the Convention. The Rev. Mr. Cook broke down in health, removed to Talladega, and quitted the active ministry. In 1846 Bishop Cobbs wrote concerning his recent visit to this region: "It is melancholy to reflect that, in all that beautiful country lying east of the Coosa river, there is not an officiating minister of the Church. May the Lord, in his good Providence, soon send forth a faithful clergyman to labor in that neglected field." The prayer has been answered after many days, and, though the Church is still a stranger in La Fayette, her ministrations are now regularly received at Anniston, Talladega, Jacksonville, Piedmont, Sylacauga, and Childersburg, and at most of these places the prospect of future growth and usefulness is most encouraging.

The case illustrative of successful planting is that of Selma. Services were begun here about the same time as at La Fayette, and were conducted twice a month by the Rev. Lucien B. Wright, who served this parish in conjunction with Hayneville. La Fayette and Selma had about the same population. Very nearly the same number of communicants was reported at each place, La Fayette reporting eight and Selma seven. But here the points of similarity



cease. Whilst in La Fayette the Church first remained stationary and then retrograded, in Selma it grew from the first. In 1839 Selma gained five communicants—a seventy per cent. increase—and began the erection of a church, a substantial brick structure, which, at completion a few years later, had cost more than eight thousand dollars. The steady growth of the congregation was uninterrupted, although, from lack of Episcopal visitations, the communicant roll did not grow longer for several years. In 1846 the Rev. J. H. Linebaugh, who had recently become rector, reported very despondently that he saw but little in the condition of the parish to give encouragement, as there were only sixteen communicants and the congregation was struggling under a debt of \$2,400, contracted for the building of the church. However, this hopelessness soon passed. In 1847 the creditors accepted \$637 in satisfaction of the entire debt, several hundred dollars were raised toward the completion of the building, the communicants increased in number to twenty-two, and the congregation laid aside its mission swaddling clothes, and stepped forth a self-supporting parish. In throwing away the crutch of outside aid the congregation gained new strength and vigor. The communicants numbered 37 in 1850, 57 in 1860, 169 in 1870, 215 in 1880, and 280 in 1890. There were times of discouragement, and, in single years, of apparent retrogression, but the comparison of decade with decade shows continual progression, and today St. Paul's Church, Selma, which at the beginning had but two communicants, is the sixth



parish in the diocese numerically, and the third financially.

As in these two places, so in others growth and dissolution were moving on with steps that, under the conditions, the wisdom of man could neither hasten nor retard. The acephalous Church was feeling its way blindly. Even as powerful members of the body as Lewis and Knapp could not give the oversight and superintendence without which the diocese must at last fail most miserably in its work. Parish priests have not the time to go out into the distant byways in search of the sheep. They have not the opportunity to know the needs of remote regions. They cannot, in their occasional experiments, act with authority. They have a line of duty marked out; and that duty is not the duty of the head. The Church has never done aggressive work without a Bishop. The Church cannot without a Bishop preserve health in what she already has. Alabama in 1840, and Alaska and Mexico in 1895, bore identical testimony to these truths across a chasm of more than half a century. Men may oftentimes close their ears to what both history and reason would fain tell them, but there is always a minority that will perceive the truth and proclaim it in season and out of season.

Some such men were living in Alabama in the early 'Forties, and they were heard at Convention after Convention. Headed by the Rev. J. J. Scott, of Livingston, and the Rev. F. R. Hanson, they contended that the lack of an Episcopal head was an unhappy anomaly, to remedy which the Convention should put forth

all its energies. Yet so strong was the opposition of some of the clergy to an election, an opposition based chiefly, it would seem, on dread that in some indefinable way a Bishop would rob them of a portion of their independence, that the clearer-headed were forced to lag with the short-sighted, penny-wise pound-foolish, majority.

But in 1842 the minority became the majority. The denial of canonical right was now untenable, for eight clergymen had been canonically resident more than twelve months. Only the endowment scheme could be used as a breakwater, and this was not pushed when seven parishes—Christ Church, Mobile, and the churches in Tuscaloosa, Greensboro, the Prairies, Livingston, Florence and Tuscumbia—pledged themselves to raise one thousand dollars of the Bishop's salary, and St. John's, Montgomery, offered to increase this amount by another thousand dollars if the Bishop should also accept the rectorship of that parish. Thus the last obstacle to the election of a Bishop was removed. The election was accordingly entered upon, and the lot fell upon the Rev. Martin P. Parks, a presbyter of the diocese of Virginia, but, at the time, chaplain of the United States Military Academy at West Point. But Mr. Parks' reply to the call was, substantially, "*Nolo Episcopari.*"

Another year passed, and again the Convention was assembled. Bishop Polk, of Louisiana, provisional Bishop of Alabama, was in the chair. He urged that the disappointment of the previous year should but make the members of the Convention more intent to

secure a Bishop, and that all other business, however urgent, should be subordinated to this supreme necessity. The Bishop's charge was followed to the letter. The Episcopal salary was placed at \$2,000 in connection with a parochial charge, or \$1,200 independently of such charge. The election resulted in the choice of the Rev. James T. Johnston, of Virginia. But he also declined the office.

The third choice was more successful. The Convention of 1844 met at Greensboro, and on May 3 again turned its eyes towards a Virginian—a record unbroken to this day. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it elected as first Bishop of the Diocese of Alabama the Rev. Nicholas Hamner Cobbs, D. D., rector of St. Paul's Church, Cincinnati. Dr. Cobbs accepted the election. He was consecrated during the General Convention at Philadelphia, on October 20, 1844, the Rt. Rev. Philander Chase being Consecrator, and Bishops Brownell of Connecticut, Onderdonk of New York, Ives of North Carolina, and Smith of Kentucky, joining in the Laying-on-of-Hands.

The Church in Alabama now had a head.



PART SECOND.

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The Episcopate of Bishop Cobbs.









**NICHOLAS HAMNER COBBS**

**FIRST BISHOP OF ALABAMA**

(From a daguerreotype taken in 1850 and now in possession of Mrs. A. P. Hogan,  
of Tuscaloosa).

## CHAPTER I.

### BISHOP COBBS' EARLY LIFE.

“**I**S that the worst they say about me? I can tell them many worse things about myself.”

This was Bishop Cobbs' only response to a bit of malicious backbiting that was once brought to his attention. It was an answer inspired not by hypocrisy but by genuine humility. It gives the key-note of the character of Alabama's first Bishop.

A brief survey of his early life will reveal the spiritual power which made such repression and sincere meekness possible.

Nicholas Hamner Cobbs was born in Bedford county, Virginia, on February 5, 1795. In boyhood and youth he knew nothing of Church influences. The clergy were few and far between. The only preaching that he heard in his minority was the hair-raising exhorting of an ultra-Calvinistic divine, who held forth in the neighborhood in a style strongly resembling that of Jonathan Edwards in the moments of his most lurid word-painting. That such distortion of the Gospel neither cast a dark shadow over his faith nor drove him into the prevailing unbelief and defiance was due largely to the devotion of his mother, by whom he was so carefully nurtured.

From his baptism in infancy to the day of his ordination he never joined in the Church services; but many of the treasures of English theology were scat-

tered among the private libraries, and to these young Cobbs, as "the school-master," had free access. His pedagogic duties, which began at the early age of seventeen, gave him the mental discipline requisite to profitable study of theology, and the theological literature that he studied in the intervals of school-room work, gave definiteness to the vague feelings of pietism which passed current for religion. He worked out his own salvation, and after twelve years of hard study he offered himself, when twenty-nine years of age, to Bishop Moore for ordination.

He was not even confirmed, but his zeal, his learning, and his piety were so marked that on the very day—May 23, 1824—on which he was confirmed and admitted to the Holy Communion he was made a deacon. This took place at Staunton, Va., where the Diocesan Convention was in session. In after years Bishop Cobbs related that often in the lonely horseback journey from Bedford to Staunton his natural timidity rose within him like a flood and almost made him determine to return home. The Angel of the Lord opposed Balaam going to curse, and urged on Cobbs going to bless.

Immediately after his ordination Mr. Cobbs returned to his home as the place marked out for the exercise of his ministry. He had married his fifteen-year-old cousin three years before, and the freedom of a celibate was not for him. Five days in the week he worked in the school-room, and two days in the week he preached the Gospel. He had to gather his own congregation. It was a virgin soil, but his work pros-



pered, and at the end of two years he had built two brick churches where none had stood before. Already his labors were so blessed that many larger congregations were inviting him to come to them, but he felt that the care of Bedford was, at least in its infant state, of divine obligation.

So for thirteen years he remained in this one charge, until, at the request of the officers of the University of Virginia, the Diocesan Convention appointed him Chaplain to the University.\* Though he had for eight years been a deputy to the General Convention, his manner was so modest and retiring, and his estimate of his own ability so low, that to some these characteristics seemed to render him unfit to cope with the aggressive materialistic spirit of the University. Yet they proved his most powerful natural agents in disarming opposition and giving point to his simple recital of the wondrous old story of the love of Christ.

On one occasion, when he was dining at a friend's house, a student of the University amused himself, after under-graduate fashion, and thought that he was amusing others, by jokes that reflected upon the clerical vocation. Mr. Cobbs said nothing and did not manifest the least annoyance; but as the company was about to rise from the table he went up to the young man, and, taking his hand in a friendly manner, said: "My young friend, I am greatly obliged to you for your admonitions. We of the clergy seldom have our faults told us so plainly, and I trust that I shall profit by your discourse." The youth's

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\*Dr. George F. Cushman's Memorial Sermon, page 17.

discomfiture was complete, yet he had no ground for anger; and the incident gave the chaplain an influence that no amount of preaching could have brought. His chaplaincy marked a new era in the history of the institution.

But the time had come when Mr. Cobbs must exercise his great power in a wider field. St. Paul's Church, Petersburg, had for some time been a source of much anxiety to Bishop Meade, who himself took charge of the parish for a few months until he could find some one peculiarly adapted to so difficult a field. He decided that Mr. Cobbs was the man, and called upon him to come to Petersburg, not as a promotion but as a duty.

God's blessing attended Mr. Cobbs' four years rectorship (1839-43), and a great material and spiritual harvest was reaped.

But circumstances arose which, in 1843, gave him no choice but to leave both Petersburg and Virginia. Bishop Moore had died in 1841, and Bishop Meade had become diocesan. The Assistant Bishop's theological status had been fixed when he called Mr. Cobbs to Petersburg, but Mr. Cobbs' views while unequivocally held were not yet so positively set forth. The quietude of Bedford and the intellectuality of Charlottesville had furnished him opportunity and incentive to study, and he had been growing stronger and broader and deeper in both spirit and intellect. But this growth, instead of degenerating into a vagueness of view that leaves all things unsolved and declares that Christians are but seekers after truth, made his grasp of the



Faith delivered once for all more definite and uncompromising. He held to the visibility and divine origin and authority of the Church, and he had come to say that next to his love and reverence for Christ, who was the Head, was his love and reverence for the Church, which was the Body. With such sentiments, he could not but yield the greatest respect to the Book of Common Prayer and abide to the full extent by the directions of the Rubrics. He believed that Friday was a fast day of obligation. He held that, since especial Collects, Epistles and Gospels had been incorporated by the Church into the Prayer Book, the Church's manifest intention was that the Feast Days should be observed by especial services. Therefore when he went to Petersburg he revived the long-neglected observance of the Church's appointed feast-days and fast-days.

By some of the good people of Virginia, and among them was Bishop Meade, this innocent and pious reformation was held to be a glaring rag of Ritualism, and an infallible sign of Romish tendencies. Mr. Cobbs' own parishioners found no fault with their rector. But elsewhere some of the laity complained. A few young deacons sniffed, as only deacons can sniff. But the Bishop made his displeasure perceptible throughout the national Church. He had requested the diocese to elect an Assistant Bishop. Dr.\* Cobbs was respected by all the clergy and almost idolized by the laity, and to him the eyes of a majority of the Diocesan Convention of 1843 instinctively turned. So

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\* Geneva College had conferred the D. D. on him in 1842.

manifestly was Dr. Cobbs the all-but-unanimous choice of the delegates that the Bishop, in view of what he deemed a prospective calamity to the Church in Virginia, felt it incumbent upon him to oppose with all his power the selection of a person of such unsound theological and ecclesiastical views. The Bishop's action left no doubt as to Mr. Cobbs' proper course. Through the Rev. Mr. Atkinson, afterwards Bishop of North Carolina, he announced that his name must not be placed before the Convention. In a short while he accepted a call to St. Paul's Church, Cincinnati, Bishop Meade's unprecedented action rendering it impossible for him to remain longer in Virginia.

Scarcely had he entered upon his new work, when the clergy of the diocese of Indiana elected him their Bishop. The laity did not concur in this election, as they deemed his acceptance improbable for many reasons. In the following year he was elected Bishop of Alabama. Not until after his death was it known, even to his family, that in 1841 the House of Bishops had elected him Missionary Bishop of the Republic of Texas, an election which was never sent down to the dioceses, as the lower House thought it inexpedient to assume responsibility for Church extension in that country.

It is a record seldom equalled, and disclosing a character and a reputation seldom paralleled, that a presbyter should within the period of four years have the eyes of three dioceses and of the Episcopate of the general Church turned upon him as one fit to be a Bishop in the household of the Faith.

## CHAPTER II.

### MISSIONARY CHARACTER OF THE COUNTRY.

BISHOP COBBS proceeded to Alabama immediately after his consecration, and entered actively upon his episcopal duties in November, 1844.

His work, he soon found, was distinctly the work of an evangelist and pioneer.

In the Tennessee valley two small congregations had been established, at Tuscumbia and Florence, four years before. The church at Huntsville, which had had a nominal existence for ten years, had just celebrated its first birthday as an organization. These three congregations, not numbering fifty communicants among them, were the only representatives of the Church in all that portion of the state north of a line drawn due east and west through Tuscaloosa. In Mobile, Christ Church was enjoying that numerical and financial growth that has ever been its good fortune. It was the one strong parish in the diocese; and rivers, marshes, and pine forests separated it by three hundred miles and two weeks of travel from its nearest neighbor.

All other congregations of the diocese were, without exception, in the Black Belt, or middle district of the state. Their territory extended, in wedge shape, from east to west, with the edge resting upon the Chattahoochee river.

This peculiar stratification of the diocese rendered

it practically a Missionary Jurisdiction, whose three component parts were separated by great reaches of country either indifferent or hostile to the Church. Not five hundred communicants, whites and blacks, lived in the entire state, and, one-half of the entire number residing in Mobile, it is plain that the remainder of the diocese was thinly sown.

Nor was the prospect of immediate growth at all promising. Only eight clergymen—six outside of Mobile—were at work, and they necessarily divided their energy among so many interests, and expended their strength in the fatigue of so much travel in private conveyances over bad roads to minister to widely separated flocks, that the hope of the most sanguine was but to hold and develop the already established congregations. Demopolis, Livingston, and St. John's in the Prairies received the ministrations of the same clergyman. Another served two country churches forty-five miles apart, one in Dallas County and one in Lowndes. Tuskaloosa was, a little later, conjoined with Elyton, fifty miles away. Another clergyman worked the wide-extending field in East Alabama, comprising Yorgesboro, Seale, Girard, Auburn, Tuskegee, Tallassee, La Fayette, and West Point. In Southwest Alabama still another did the work at St. Stephen's, Bladon Springs, Butler, and Pushmataha.\* Some fields even broader than these are comprised in a single missionary station today, but comfortable

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\*Stated services have not for many years been held in any of these places, except Auburn.

steamboats, good railroads, and fair highways make them actually much more compact.

As weak as the diocese was numerically, it was even weaker financially. Bishop Cobbs came to Alabama on a salary of \$1,500 a year and traveling expenses,\* and, although in 1849 the Bishop had by untiring work increased the number of clergymen to what was the phenomenal number of eighteen, the number of congregations to twenty-six, and the number of communicants to more than seven hundred, yet even then the diocese felt able to increase his salary to only \$1,750; and this sum included his traveling expenses.

Ministerial salaries were as pitifully small as was the Episcopal salary, and were, in many cases, eked out by school-teaching. One of the largest parishes—a parish that enjoyed this distinction, though having fewer than twenty communicants—promised its rector \$300 a year, and intimated the possibility of raising another hundred by the efforts of the women in fairs and mite-meetings. In some cases parishes would not promise their minister any specified sum, but would make the very commercial agreement that the weekly offertory—come rain, come shine—should constitute the rector's salary. This plan, while obviously open to serious objection—calling for more trustfulness in parson than in people, making the rector an easy target for congregational caprice, and rendering it easy for uncourageous parishes to rid them-

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\*His traveling expenses in 1845 were \$60. Generally he traveled in his own buggy. When he used the stage he was not permitted to pay fare.

selves of undesirable ministers by the cruel method of "starving them out"—did not work at all badly in comparison with the too frequently experienced system of promising much and irregularly paying little. Indeed, those clergymen upon whom the plan was tried bore witness that the salary averaged well, and, coming in regularly, allowed them to settle their grocery bills punctually.\*

The meager support given the clergy was partly excusable by the necessity laid upon many congregations of building for themselves houses of worship; but, after all due allowance is made, the great cause still remains: the laity were unwilling to test the Lord's promise to them that bring their tithes into His storehouse. Their penuriousness towards the Church resulted from their false, self-erected standard of spirituality, and felt exculpated by comparison of their own ministers' salaries with the salaries of neighboring Baptist preachers and Methodist circuit-riders. Refusing most properly to set up money as a yard-stick of spirituality, they refused most improperly to accept it as a weather-vane.

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\*Convention Journal for 1852, page 10.



## CHAPTER III.

### MISSIONARY SOWINGS.

HAD a narrower man than Doctor Cobbs become Bishop of Alabama in 1844, it is probable that finding the Church already established in Mobile, Tuscaloosa, Greensboro, Montgomery, Huntsville, and Selma, and a few smaller places, he would have directed every effort towards the upbuilding of the congregations already established. The motive would have been, to make them strong centers of operations in the following generation. The motto would have been, "Concentrate."

But as it was Bishop Cobbs that came to the oversight of Alabama, such was not the course pursued. The new Bishop's mind reverted to the scattering of the Church from Jerusalem and the consequent spread of the Faith. He felt that men, not parishes, were the proper centers of operations. His motto was, "Diffuse."

In following the line of endeavor suggested by this word, he did not neglect his duty to the flocks already gathered. He visited these first of all. He acquainted himself with them and made them acquainted with himself. When he visited a congregation it was not his chief object to get out of town at the earliest opportunity that decency allowed. He visited the sick and the afflicted at their homes. He catechized the children in Sunday School. He gathered the Negroes and

preached them the Gospel. He met with vestries and discussed their present difficulties and future prospects. He counselled with the clergy as brother with brother. Not one of a Bishop's many duties to a congregation did he neglect or willingly forego. He was never happier than when the parish minister unfolded an extensive Episcopal program for the visitation.

But he was not satisfied that a Bishop's duty to his diocese ended with even the most faithful visitation of established congregations. He was not content merely to "fill his appointments" and go back home. As he passed through the country he sought all possible information about isolated Church families and about towns wherein the Church's voice had never been heard. The former he either visited himself or brought to the attention of the nearest clergyman.\* The latter he always visited and tested for their ability to receive the Church. In the earlier years of his Episcopate he visited many such places. Willingness to hear him was as warm an invitation as he cared to receive, and this willingness became yearly more and more pronounced among the people of all denominations. Truly insignificant was the unvisited hamlet lying within fifty or one hundred miles of the Bishop's line of travel. Among the first towns and settlements in which he made experiment were Tuskegee, Marion, Burton's Hill, Sumterville, Northport, Mount Meigs, Jacksonville and Montevallo. At every one of these

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\* The Bishop kept a register of such persons, and in 1860 had 103 communicants on this list.

places a congregation was established, and, Tuskegee and Northport excepted, established permanently.

The almost uniform success that he met with in these pioneer visits impressed deeply upon the Bishop the need for more clergy. He felt that, do what he could, his hands were tied unless he could leave workmen in the field. In 1846 he pointed, in addition to the towns just mentioned, to Livingston, Lowndesboro, Hayneville, Wetumpka, Eufaula, La Fayette, Talladega and Tuscumbia as favorable points for missionary work, in case he could secure missionaries. How true his foresight is indicated by the fact that in all these places but La Fayette and Wetumpka congregations are today living more or less fully the life of the One Body.

The Bishop's missionary zeal inspired the other clergy, and right heartily did they follow the lead of him who said not "Go!" but "Come!" The rector of St. John's, Montgomery, took upon himself the missionary charge of Mount Meigs in Montgomery county, Robinson Springs in Autauga county, Tuskegee in Macon county, Hayneville in Lowndes county, St. David's in Dallas county, and Wetumpka (now in Elmore county). A little later, when St. Andrew's, Hayneville, had grown to the stature of a parish, its minister watched over the missions at Lowndesboro and Benton in Lowndes county, and Pleasant Hill in Dallas county. In like manner, points about Huntsville, Greensboro, Selma, and Mobile, received ministrations with considerable frequency and regularity.

It is true that in not a few cases no permanent congregation was formed. There was much going to and fro of population. So young was the state, that Churchmen, like others, did not feel any hereditary love for their homes, and were easily persuaded to try new fields. Old churches passed away, and their congregations dissolved. But the individual members appeared elsewhere, and, though their personal labors and pecuniary interest were greatly reduced, they were not entirely lost to the Church.

At any rate the missionary work that was done among the villages and on the plantations was done faithfully, and subsequently bore much fruit. The kaleidoscopic changes in town and country congregations, which for awhile seemed to proclaim the vanity of all the labors ministerial that had gone before, in fact brought about a homogeneity of the entire diocese that has in later days been a chief source of strength.

## CHAPTER IV.

### DIFFICULTIES AND DISCOURAGEMENTS.

GREAT as were the geographical difficulties that beset the Church's growth, the theological difficulties were greater.

Marked distrust pervaded the community as to the evangelical and spiritual character of the Church. The Oxford Movement and the Tracts for the Times were not in sufficient perspective for men to judge rightly of their tendencies. "Puseyism" was a bogey that frightened many men, not merely those within the Church, but multitudes without it. It was felt that the Anglican communion was, somehow, on trial for attempted liaison with Rome. In 1844 the General Convention had been importuned to reprehend and condemn "the serious errors in doctrine which have within a few years been introduced and extensively promulgated by means of tracts, the press, and the pulpit." This the General Convention had declined to do, and its declaration that "the Church is not responsible for the errors of individuals" was taken as an evasion of the matter—which it undoubtedly was—and a confession of sympathy with the new-born evils—which it undoubtedly was not.

Newman, Wilberforce, Manning, Faber, and Ward, chief exponents of the so-called Catholic Renaissance, seemed to declare the true character of the movement by moving into the Church of Rome. In America,

too, Romanism was beginning to lift its head, encouraged by the great influx of Irish immigrants. Bishop Ives, the Protestant Episcopal Bishop of North Carolina, after a mental struggle which, in the course of several years, showed itself in the most remarkable vacillation, at length tendered his allegiance as a layman to the Bishop of Rome. Others accompanied and followed him.

It was a natural result of these defections that throughout the American nation Protestant Christianity felt an increased distrust of the Church, and that in this decade the Church's growth was far less in proportion than the growth of the country. Mistaking the nature of the disease, the "Memorialists" of 1853—numbering among themselves the future Bishops M. A. DeWolfe Howe, G. T. Bedell, and A. Cleveland Coxe, and the distinguished presbyters William Augustus Muhlenberg, Alexander H. Vinton, John Henry Hobart, and Francis Vinton—ascribed this slow growth to our ecclesiastical polity and liturgical worship.

But Bishop Cobbs was not panic-stricken. That others had abused what was good did not make him therefore refuse it. He did not protect himself from suspicion by indulging in wholesale denunciation of the Oxford movement and its after effects. While others would fain have conciliated a caviling sectarianism by a vandalism of order and rite that, after all, would not have produced any better understanding or closer affiliation, he quite contentedly allowed men to call him "a semi-Papist" for holding unwaveringly



to the old paths. He exhorted the clergy "to adhere to their own principles and usages with uncompromising firmness, and always to perform the worship of the Church with the most scrupulous observance of the rubrics and canons." At the same time he urged against an increasing formalism, and insisted that the only way by which the clergy of Alabama could protect the good character of the Church in Alabama was by clearly and explicitly setting forth the evangelical principles of the Church as contained in Prayer Book and Homilies—the corruption of human nature, justification by faith in the merits and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, the need of a renovation of heart, of the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, and of a dutiful obedience manifested not only in the observance of ordinances, but in the keeping of commandments, and in the fruits of righteousness and holiness—if only this should be the faithful and consistent teaching of the clergy, the issue would not long remain doubtful.

This would have been true but for other considerations, which cannot remain unnoticed:

The outside world was not moving toward the Church. Men were not hungering and thirsting for a better and purer form of religion than that which they already enjoyed. What they had they really enjoyed; and enjoyment was the popular conception of Christian perfection. Indifferentism wore the thin veil of liberality. Into villages and settlements any religious society was welcomed if it did not expressly or by necessary implication question the authority and

doctrine of prior bodies. Alabama was like the Roman Pantheon, wherein every God was welcomed but the Christian's God, who was rejected because He was "a jealous God."

Inoculated with the virus of this spurious liberality, many of the Church's own children grew up without adequate ideas of the high dignity of the Church, and her ministry and sacraments. They were ignorant of her doctrines, careless of her sanction, indifferent to her privileges, neglectful of her ordinances; and finally, by inevitable consequence, turned their backs on their spiritual mother and went off into schism or worldliness. Their unwillingness to learn the teachings of the Church brought on inability to receive them. Neglecting the ministrations of the Church, they next denied her unity, holiness, catholicity, and Apostolicity; and finding the teaching of the clergy out of touch with their own raw conclusions, denounced their erstwhile teachers as narrow and uncharitable.

For another hindrance the clergy themselves were to blame. They remained in their own parishes too continuously without holding converse and exchanging experiences with fellow clergymen, and thus failed to give and to receive the help that the parish priest so much needs to prevent either his peculiar trials from cowering him or his little successes from puffing him. The relation of *paroikia* to *dioikia*, of parish to household, seems to have been imperfectly apprehended. Attendance on annual Conventions was miserably small and discouraging. It was impossible to

bring the whole diocese to any concerted plan of action when only one-half the clergy attended the annual Conventions. This was an evil that the Bishop earnestly sought to remove ; but, though a measure of success attended his efforts, improvement was not permanent until very shame at the absence of two-thirds of their order from the Convention of 1858 made the clergy themselves determine to reform. It could not but be a drag on the Church that, with twenty-seven clergy entitled to a vote and more than fifty congregations entitled to representation, her Convention numbered, not eighty-five delegates, but only twenty-nine.

The migratory disposition of the clergy was another substantial hindrance. In the conventional year 1847-8 six clergymen removed from one parish to another or left the diocese. Of those who had elected Dr. Cobbs Bishop four years before only one remained in the diocese—the Rev. N. P. Knapp—and he had removed to another parish. In the five years, 1853-58, sixteen of the twenty-seven clergy resident the first year of the period left the diocese, and of the eleven that remained only six remained in uninterrupted charge of their respective congregations. These constant migrations were unfavorable to Church growth, for in removing from one parish to another, even though remaining in the diocese, the clergy lost much of their slowly acquired influence, which they could neither transfer to their successors nor carry to their new parishes. The injury thus inflicted upon old con-

gregations was considerable; upon new ones it was incalculable.

Other serious obstacles demand passing remark. The Bishop's health was never good, and it was only by sheer force of will that he kept going. But even will power has occasionally to succumb. In 1847-8 the Bishop visited few congregations, confirming in the aggregate not quite two-score persons. Later in 1848, his own sickness in Huntsville, from June to November, and sickness in his family in Tuscaloosa, prevented him from making any visitations. For one reason or another several of the clergy were deposed within a short period. In 1846 the Rev. S. S. Lewis, long a tower of strength despite the ravages of consumption, was obliged to retire from work; two years later he passed away. In 1850 more than one-half the congregations were without ministerial services. In 1851 Mr. Lay and Mr. Morrison, in Huntsville and Montgomery, were entirely disabled by ill health. A similar reason carried Mr. Massey away from Mobile five months, and Mr. Cushman from Seale and Auburn nearly an entire year; and an overturning stage coach so injured the Bishop in his right shoulder that he was disabled for a considerable period. In 1854 another prince in Israel, the Rev. N. P. Knapp, rested from his labors. Fierce conflict between the rector and the vestry of Christ Church, Tuscaloosa, and a subsequent parochial schism of a year's duration, gave the enemy much occasion to blaspheme. Yellow fever devastated Montgomery for two months each of this and the two ensuing years.

In the latter year, 1855, Elyton, Birmingham's fore-runner, summed up in one sentence the obstacle that to less extent dampened ardor and chilled faith in many other portions of the diocese: "The Church service has not been celebrated in this parish for about two years."

Yet throughout this period, which from one point of view seems to have been full of doubt, half-heartedness, and gloom, betokening fast-approaching disintegration, the Bishop walked firmly and worked indefatigably, strong in his conviction that the life-giving Spirit of God would, in His own good time, move through the chaos.

## CHAPTER V.

### WITH LOINS BEGIRT.

THE history of the Church in Alabama in the 'Forties and 'Fifties is not always to be pursued as in gloom and misgiving. We may speak of the reward of faithfulness and the sifting of the sunshine into the darkness.

While churches were vacant, clergy itinerant, Churchmen despondent, and sectarians sibilant, signs of increased life-pulsations and stronger heart-throbs began to appear here and there. The second year of this episcopate (1846) saw, in Mobile, the beginning of the "Free Episcopal Church," which, under the careful ministration of the Rev. B. M. Miller, soon became an established congregation, known as Trinity Church; in Huntsville, the erection of a small brick church-building, which enabled the congregation to vacate the court house; and in Eutaw, the subscription of two thousand dollars towards the building of St. Stephen's Church. The clergy list had increased in the number of active workers to sixteen. Already there were seven candidates for the ministry.

In the following year (1847) a future Bishop, Henry C. Lay, then only twenty-three years old, became rector of the Church of the Nativity, Huntsville, and soon had impressed his strong young personality on the entire diocese.

The yearly confirmations did not increase apprecia-



bly for ten years, remaining constantly at about one hundred ; but at the end of that period they suddenly rose to two hundred, and seldom afterward fell below this number.

By immigration the communicant-roll grew with greater rapidity. While it took four years (1849-1853) to grow from 729 to 1,019, the same increase was gained in the next two years (1853-1855).

The clergy were following the Bishop's lead in caring for isolated families, and were enabled the better to do this by the constant increase in their numbers. Twelve clergymen were at work in 1844, sixteen in 1850, and twenty-two in 1855. Every Church family was looked upon as the possible nucleus of a congregation, and not infrequently the possible became the actual. Six years of careful nursing so developed the diocese that, in 1852, the increase had been four-fold, and the congregations numbered seventy-eight.

In the autumn of 1851 the Bishop felt that the best interests of the diocese required him to reside in Montgomery. When he came to Alabama Tuscaloosa was the capital, and he made that place his home because there his influence told for the most. From the capital radiated the three stage lines, to Montgomery (*via* Selma), Huntsville, and Columbus, Miss., and by these, the trunk-lines of early Alabama, Episcopal visitations and missionary excursions were rendered more practicable. But when the capital was moved to Montgomery, in 1847, Tuscaloosa was side-tracked, and facilities of intercourse with the provinces became quite poor. After suffering this inconvenience for

five years, the Bishop yielded to the same considerations that had carried him to Tuscaloosa, and, in the spring of 1852, removed to the new capital. Upon his removal the Churchmen of Montgomery presented him with three thousand dollars towards the purchase of a home. The Bishop bought a house and several acres of land in the edge of town and settled himself there. The long, low red brick house that was his home thenceforward is still occupied by the family of one of his sons, ex-State Treasurer John L. Cobbs, who as a boy accompanied his father on many a journey through the diocese.

So soon as the awkwardness of living in an out-of-the-way place had been disposed of, Bishop Cobbs showed the ultimate possibilities of his vigor. In 1851-2 the amount of work that he accomplished far surpassed that of any preceding year. A synopsis of his work—exclusive of sermonic, epistolary, executive, and pastoral labors, which cannot be synoptized, but of all which he did a large amount—will not be unprofitable reading.

From Montgomery as his starting-point he made his visitations in four distinct series. In the first series he went directly from Montgomery to Cahaba, where he preached on May 15. The next day he was at Selma, fifteen miles northeast, where he preached and confirmed two persons. The overturning of the stagecoach next day, and his consequent injuries, delayed him more than two weeks in his progress. On Whitsunday, however, he was at work again, preaching at Tuscaloosa in the morning in Christ

Church and in the afternoon in St. Philip's chapel to the Negroes. Thence he visited Eutaw, thirty-five miles southwest; went twelve miles further south into the "Fork of Greene," one of the most fertile regions of the whole South; thence into Sumter county to Gainesville, thirty miles northwest; thence to Sumterville, ten miles southwest; and on to Livingston, ten miles due south. From Livingston he crossed the Tombigbee back into Greene county, and, visiting another portion of the "Fork," known as Burton's Hill,\* went on to Tuskaloosa. Here he remained three weeks, preaching frequently and catching up with his correspondence. Throughout the next month he was working in Perry and Marengo counties, visiting successively Marion, St. John's-in-the-Prairies, and Woodville (now Uniontown), and remaining, not twelve hours, but an entire week in each place—much after the manner, and much with the success, of St. Paul. The next three months—it was now August—were spent in Tuskaloosa, and then the visitation of the northern portion of the diocese began. Elyton was the first stop, and then came a necessarily long jump through a sparsely settled country to the Tennessee River, where the route was, in order, Huntsville, Athens, Decatur, Courtland, Florence, and Tusculumbia. Passing back to Middle Alabama, he stopped at Tuskaloosa long enough to preach twice, and then went on down into Marengo county, where he began

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\* It was from this place that St. Mark's Church, Boligee, formerly known as "St. Mark's, Fork of Greene," was removed.

his visitations at Prairieville and Demopolis. His further work in this district was interrupted by his necessary presence at the consecration in Augusta, Georgia, of Bishop Rutledge of Florida; but while on his way to Georgia he visited Jacksonville. and on his return journey preached and confirmed at Talladega. The broken thread of Middle Alabama visitations was taken up at Selma, on October 22, and then the Bishop began to work eastward, taking in, on his route, Lowndesboro, Montgomery, Auburn, St. John's-in-the-Wilderness (Russell county), and Eufaula. He then made a long jump to those places that he visited earlier in the year, going to Greensboro, Tuskaloosa, Greene Springs Academy, back to Tuskaloosa, Bethsalem (in the Fork of Greene), and Eutaw. Two months after his former visits he returned to Greensboro, to make a deacon, and to Tuskaloosa, to officiate at the marriage of a daughter. After a three weeks' sojourn in Tuskaloosa, he went to Montgomery for a few days, and returned to Tuskaloosa for a stay of two weeks, remaining, on his way back, a week each at Selma and Greensboro. He was at Montgomery throughout Lent, assisting the rector in services and pastoral work, preaching for him, and making experimental visits to Wetumpka and Robinson's Springs. Immediately after Easter he went to Mobile, worked there two weeks, and returned home by way of the Dallas county churches, St. David's, St. Peter's, and St. Paul's.

It will be seen, from this itinerary, that the four series of visitations were made, the first in the west, the second in the north, the third in the east, and the

fourth in the south of the state. Confirmation classes were uniformly small, seldom consisting of more than two persons, in only two cases exceeding four, and in one-half the congregations numbering only one.

The Bishop testified that in his visitations he was no stranger to mortifications, privations, and dangers; not the least of which was the occasional necessity of camping four days in the rain on the bank of a constantly rising river, waiting for a steamboat that might have come at any hour but did not come at all.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE CHURCH BUILDING ERA.

ABOUT 1850 one great cause of small confirmation classes began to disappear. So long as the congregation in any town, village, or settlement was compelled to worship in a dwelling house, many that were kindly disposed towards the Church but were not strong in the Faith declined to join their fortunes with those of the new-come Christian body. For aught that they knew its local existence was but ephemeral, and they did not care to be identified with an unsuccessful ecclesiastical experiment.

It is true that this very houseless and hopeless condition of many congregations was long their protection against the gnat-like persecution that sectarian villagers are so well skilled to practice; and it is equally true that so soon as these congregations began to achieve a local habitation disdainful or pitying tolerance was succeeded by aggressive opposition, characterized more by ignorant fanaticism than by Christ-like zeal. Sometimes, it must be confessed, this prejudice was deepened and intensified with good reason by the intemperate sectarianism of a new-fledged parish. A young clergyman met a child of Methodist parents in the street of a village in Middle Alabama and, on ascertaining that the boy had received his baptism at the hands of a Methodist preacher, exclaimed pityingly: "Poor child! Poor benighted



little heathen ! ” The hatred of the Church aroused by this speech had not died out a generation later.

But it was better for the Church that it should grow through pain than that it should die through inanition. Sectarian intolerance injured itself by reducing the number of those who would have left the communion of the Church, and the prospect of permanent organization encouraged many to return to their spiritual Mother.

The same impulse seems to have been felt throughout the entire diocese about this time. Within no other single decade have so many church buildings been erected as in 1850-60. In this period not fewer than eighteen congregations built permanent homes for themselves. Eleven of these were completed in the years 1852, '53, and '54. They were mostly in Middle Alabama. Eufaula, Demopolis, Faunsdale, Auburn, Macon, Sumterville, Montgomery, Cahaba, Burton's Hill, Camden, and Lowndesboro erected substantial houses of worship in the order named ; and Christ Church parish, Tuscaloosa, built a chapel for its Negro congregation. In South Alabama the erection in Mobile of St. John's Church for the poor of the southern portion of the city was due to the munificence of three liberal parishioners of Christ Church—Emanuel Jones, William P. Hammond, and John Johnson; St. Mary's was built at Summerville, a suburb of Mobile, and St. Paul's at Spring Hill, four miles further west. In North Alabama the congregations at Tuscumbia, Jacksonville, and Huntsville were well housed before the decade closed.

The majority of these churches were quite modest in appearance. Only two were of brick—St. John's, Montgomery, and the Nativity, Huntsville—and these, costing respectively \$21,000 and \$35,000, were built to replace older structures, which had become too small for the growing congregations. Every other church edifice built at this time, even that of St. John's, Mobile, was of wood.

With the exception of the three new churches in Mobile, Montgomery, and Huntsville, the church buildings of this decade were capable of seating anywhere from one hundred to three hundred people, the smaller size predominating. Generally the architectural features, without and within, were devoid of beauty, taste, or significance. The designers seem to have drunk in their inspiration from Methodist houses of worship.\* A plain rectangle, barely escaping squareness; two doors, dividing the front into three equal parts; rectangular windows, with clear glass and swinging shutters; a high-eaved, wide-angled Corinthian roof; these held the view from the exterior. Within, the body of the church was almost a perfect cube, with high, flat plastered ceiling; the line of beauty was absent, and the acoustics were inevitably bad. The chancel, when recess, was a minute, unventilated box; but usually it was only a platform divided from the remainder of the nave by a rail. Sometimes the font and sometimes the pulpit stood in the exact middle of this platform, hindering, and it

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\* Noteworthy exceptions were St. John's, Forkland, and St. Luke's, Jacksonville, planned by Dr. Upjohn.

would seem, hindering symbolically, clear view of the altar and unobstructed access to it. Not infrequently the reredos was made up of three large panels containing the Ten Commandments flanked by the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed. Frequently there was no lecturn, and the Minister would either kneel at the rail or go within the Sanctuary for Morning Prayer and Litany as well as for the Holy Communion. The pulpit was far above the heads of the congregation, and was, in some places, entered only by a flight of stairs from the vestry-room, wherein, during the singing of the hymn before the sermon, the preacher exchanged surplice and stole for black preaching-gown and gloves. The choir was placed at the farthest distance possible from the Minister, either on a low platform between the front doors, or in a gallery constructed, as the event proved, for the especial privacy of the singers, that they might not, in the intervals of repose after their arduous labors, be disturbed by the devotions of the congregation. Vested choirs had been heard of, but it is doubtful whether the Minister that suggested their introduction would thereafter have received any more respectful hearing than if he had dared preach in his surplice. The entire service and all the surroundings were barren of beauty and dignity, and if revived today would be unendurable to a city congregation—so far away have we traveled. In a few rural congregations some of these old customs still linger, but the most pronounced are fast fading from memory.

Of the churches thus built some no longer exist.

When the stir of war was calmed whole congregations had disappeared. Trinity Church, Auburn, was almost forgotten. Cahaba was given over to bats and owls, the entire white population having emigrated. Summerville's sparse population could reach the Mobile churches in twenty minutes by horse-cars, and preferring the more ornate services and sermons of the city, no longer maintained a separate organization. But in their life-time the churches of the past served their purpose. They labored and others have entered into their labors.

## CHAPTER VII.

### CONGREGATIONAL GROWTH.

THE building of churches by newly-established congregations was not the only evidence of ecclesiastical growth. Congregations, old and new, were alike growing in size.

Naturally this numerical increase was most perceptible in Mobile, where the Church had struck her roots the deepest. In less than twelve months after its erection, St. John's Church was enlarged to meet the growth of its congregation, and in the next year its rector presented forty persons for confirmation. In Trinity in the same year twenty-eight were confirmed, and in Christ Church sixteen. The following year forty-seven were confirmed in St. John's, twenty-nine in Christ Church, and twenty-seven in Trinity. Of the two hundred and eleven confirmations in the diocese, more than one-half were in Mobile. Fourteen of these were Negroes, members of the newly-organized mission of the Good Shepherd. In subsequent years of the decade these large confirmation classes remained the rule. St. John's were the largest, for that parish was reaping among a people not previously touched by the Church. For the next five years its annual confirmations averaged nearly thirty, Trinity's twenty, and those of Christ Church fifteen. Knapp at Christ Church, Massey at Trinity, and Ingraham at St. John's were a trio of intellectual

and spiritual giants whose contemporaneous work was, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, irresistible.

Elsewhere parochial growth was, if not so pronounced, at least healthy and encouraging. In Montgomery the confirmations averaged about fourteen each year, and as early as 1853 St. John's had enrolled more than one hundred communicants. In Tuscaloosa, where the rate of growth was nearest that of Montgomery, the yearly confirmations averaged ten, but not till 1859 did the communicants number one hundred. Huntsville, Greensboro, and Selma come next in order of growth, but the storm of war broke over the land ere they, too, became a century. In 1860 Huntsville had only eighty-eight communicants, Greensboro seventy-two, and Selma fifty-seven.

But the strength of the diocese was not then, as now it is, relatively so much greater in the cities than in the country. Social conditions were unlike those of to-day. The most cultured people lived in true baronial style, far from centers of population. Many Churchmen lived in scattered settlements on their vast contiguous plantations, remote from railroad and telegraph, off the line of stage travel, and reaching the outside world by their own conveyances. Of Church families thus living not more than five, ten, or fifteen miles apart not a few congregations were formed; and though, from the nature of the conditions, numerical progress was either slow or entirely absent, yet growth of influence was plainly perceptible. In Lowndes county, St. Peter's Church; in



Marengo, St. Michael's; in Greene, St. Mark's; in Dallas, St. David's; in Russell, St. John's-in-the-Wilderness; in Madison, St. John's—all these were churches set down by the country roadside, and are to-day without parallel in all Alabama. One of these country congregations equaled in size the present congregations at Evergreen or Woodlawn. Another was as large as is the church at either Troy or Union Springs. Another's communicant roll equaled that of Marion or Athens to-day. One stood tenth in numbers on a roll of seventy-eight congregations. Several were larger than were the churches at Demopolis, Florence, Uniontown, Eufaula, Camden, Lowndesboro, and Auburn. They received the ministrations, not of raw deacons, but of tried and experienced men—of Morris, Hanson, Cobbs, the Stickneys, the Smiths, Perdue, Robertson, and Lee.

Of the encouragement given by the smaller congregations undoubtedly St. Paul's, Carlowville, is the most striking illustration. In 1839 a mere handful of communicants formed its congregation. The village was a sect-ridden little place, Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians holding undisputed sway. The Rev. F. B. Lee, who was made deacon in this year, came directly to Carlowville, and lived and worked in this one charge throughout his ministerial life of fifty-seven years. The first few years of the congregation's life were devoid of special encouragement, but in 1844 the mission-station was large enough—though, in truth, no considerable size was demanded—to be admitted as a parish. Two years later its first statistical report

showed thirty communicants. The net increase of the next four years was only four communicants, but thereafter increase was marked, the number enrolled being, in 1855 forty-nine, and in 1860 eighty-three. In this year only six parishes ranked it in size, and of these Huntsville outnumbered it by but five communicants.

Another small parish of great promise was St. Luke's, Cahaba, which was born in the same year as St. Paul's, Carlowville. It was first served by the Rev. Lucien B. Wright, who divided his time equally between this place and Selma. The services were well attended from the first, but there was no indication of permanent establishment. Still, after four years of persevering ministerial work the congregation became an entity. That it was a dim and shadowy entity is evident from the report made in 1846 by Mr. Wright's successor, the Rev. J. H. Linebaugh, on occasion of his first visit to the place: "*I understand* that there are *perhaps* two communicants in the village, and many who decidedly prefer the Church." One of these two communicants moved away the next year, but his place was filled by the removal of another into the town. Two persons were confirmed; and the "parish" now had four communicants. During the next five years the number fluctuated between five and ten. Ministers changed. Vacancies were of frequent recurrence. But a slowly improving state of affairs urged patience and perseverance. In 1853 a rectory was built, and the Rev. J. M. Mitchell, Bishop Cobbs' son-in-law, became the first resident minister. Growth

began at once. The number of communicants went to fifteen, to twenty-one, to thirty-five, and, in 1859, to thirty-seven, its highest number. A five-thousand-dollar church was built, paid for, and consecrated. The Rev. George F. Cushman, subsequently editor of *The Churchman*, was its rector several years. William L. Yancey was for a time a member of the vestry. The parish remained prosperous and vigorous so long as Cahaba retained its white population. It passed away more than twenty years ago, but neither the congregation nor the building was lost to the diocese. Martin's Station has the building, and Selma the congregation.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE CHURCH'S SLAVE CHILDREN.

WHILE thus slowly but surely developing her strength and influence among the whites of Alabama, the Church was not neglecting the slaves that came within her purview.

Dr. Muhlenberg's characteristically Northern misconception, to which he is said to have given utterance "wittily"\* a decade before,

"The stars are the scars  
And the stripes are the wipes  
Of the lash on the Negro's back,"

had little foundation in fact. Forgetting that, aside from moral and religious considerations, selfish desire to keep their property in good condition would in itself be sufficient to prevent slave-holders from maltreating their slaves, writers like Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe were fanning sectionalism into a brighter flame by representing rare local conditions as types of universal practice.

But even so they were taken in their own craftiness. As Bishop Wilmer subsequently pointed out, the testimony of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was a witness to any thoughtful man of the peaceful relationship between master and slave. "If you want a good, honest, and religious servant, seek him among the slaves—find an

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\* *Life and Work of William Augustus Muhlenberg*, by Anne Ayres, page 137.

Uncle Tom; if you want to see a glorious specimen of womanly loveliness, seek her among the slave-holders—find an Eva; and keep every Down-Easter from having any power over the poor creatures.”\*

In truth both the physical and the spiritual wants of the slaves were supplied most generously; and however closely the motives of the slave-holders be examined, however much it be charged that the slaves' bodies were cared for from selfishness rather than from philanthropy, and religious ministrations provided rather as a moral police-force than as an aid to spiritual life, the fact remains that in the South the slaves were admirably well cared for.

Especially in Alabama do we find evidence of such care. Into the material question it is foreign to the purpose of this history to enter; but from the very beginning parochial reports tell of Negro children baptized and Negro adults confirmed. What other religious bodies did for the slaves it is impossible for the writer to ascertain; but when it is considered that the work of which brief mention is herein made was done by the representatives of a body which numbered only three thousand souls, out of a total white population of a quarter of a million, and that religious zeal was not monopolized by Churchmen, some conception is possible of the Christian force brought to bear on the ante-bellum Negro.

IN Mobile as early as 1840 the Rev. S. S. Lewis was preaching regularly to a congregation of these

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\* Bishop Wilmer's *Reminiscences*, pp. 43 and 44.

people, which, consisting at first of six or eight persons, soon numbered more than one hundred. At St. John's-in-the-Prairies twelve were communicants. Smaller numbers were attached to most of the other congregations.

When Bishop Cobbs came to Alabama, increased attention was given to this work. In 1846 nearly one-half the baptisms in the entire diocese were of Negroes, and for many years thereafter this proportion was approximated. In a single year, sixty-eight Negro children were baptized in St. David's Church, Dallas county. In the ensuing year Mobile, Demopolis, Uniontown and Faunsdale reported one hundred and fourteen baptisms of Negroes. In Livingston, twenty were baptized in a twelve-month. In Eutaw, the following year, thirty-six were baptized. In Huntsville, in 1854, fifty-one were baptized; and in Faunsdale, the year after, forty-two. In single years Cahaba reported the baptism of twenty-two Negro infants, Uniontown thirty-two, and Lowndesboro fifty-seven. In 1860, two hundred and thirteen Negroes were baptized in the diocese. Very incomplete records show that the total of Negro baptisms in Alabama during the sixteen years of Bishop Cobbs' episcopate was sixteen hundred, of which about three hundred were of adults.

The number of confirmations was far less, for the very good reason that many proved themselves after baptism to be unfit for admission to the higher privileges of the Church; whilst the caution and thorough instruction necessitated by the weak moral character



of the candidates discouraged many more from persevering to the end. Yet that much good and effective work was done among them is evident from the number of Negro communicants towards the close of the period. They had grown from fewer than fifty in 1845 to more than one hundred and fifty. They formed exclusively the congregations of the Good Shepherd, in Mobile, and St. John's-in-the-Wilderness, in Russell County. They predominated in St. Michael's, Faunsdale, and St. David's, in Dallas County. They formed a considerable portion of the congregations at Tuscaloosa, where they worshipped in a chapel built for their use, and at Spring Hill, in Mobile County. At Selma, alone of the larger congregations, nothing was done for the Negro; this parish having had, in all its history, only one negro communicant.

Much of the religious instruction given the slaves would have been impossible but for the self-forgetful devotion of master and mistress, who would regularly on Sunday catechize the laborers and children, and in some instances even give a half-holiday that the Negroes might attend week-day services.

## CHAPTER IX.

### ENDOWMENT OF THE EPISCOPATE.

ALTHOUGH the immediate interests of the diocese, both temporal and spiritual, were thus carefully guarded, its future welfare was not forgotten. The period was one of infancy, and, while present growth was small, it was felt that the removal of obstacles to the free exercise of the body would be followed in the years to come by the development of great strength.

The drags upon the Church were four in number: 1st, The taxation of weak congregations for the support of the Bishop, and the consequent corporate struggle for daily bread and arrested development in good work; 2nd, The inability of many small congregations to secure the services of a minister, and the absence of concerted action to introduce the Church into new territory; 3rd, The almost inevitable destitution that awaited the families of deceased clergymen, and the consequent unrest of the clergy, who were often induced, by offers of larger salaries, to leave a prosperous field; and, 4th, The ignorance that Churchwomen and the future mothers of Churchmen manifested of Churchmanship and the Eternal Verities as distinguished from the evanescent opinions of men and centuries.

To overcome these obstacles to a higher and freer diocesan life, four great undertakings were manifestly

necessary: 1st, To endow the Episcopate; 2nd, To organize the missionary operations; 3rd, To provide for the worn-out clergy, and the widows and orphans of deceased clergy; and, 4th, To furnish Church education to the mothers of the next generation.

These were the four great divisions of work for the future so nobly undertaken, so patiently prosecuted, and so successfully achieved. The completion of all this work in so short a time is the chief glory of the ante-bellum Church in Alabama. How each undertaking was carried to a successful conclusion shall now be considered.

It has been told that the original foundation of the Episcopal endowment fund was the gift by Mr. Jacob Lorillard of a township of land in Baldwin County, and that this gift was the nucleus around which clustered unfulfilled promises amounting to four thousand dollars.\* The Baldwin County land was sold for five hundred dollars. As late as 1844 this five hundred dollars was the entire endowment fund.

Though the election of a Bishop entailed an additional expense of less than sixteen hundred dollars, this small sum was not easily raised by the fourteen congregations that comprised the assessable strength of the diocese. The attempt of 1845 to ease this burden was, from its nature, doomed to failure. It sought to revive the notes given Mr. Ives during "Flush Times," and proposed to credit on any parish's assessment for the Bishop's salary all the interest that any member of that parish would pay on his long-neg-

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\* See page 29.

lected note. This proposition received no response. It was nullified the following year, and was succeeded by another fruitless experiment: The Senior Wardens of the various parishes were requested to solicit subscriptions to the Bishop's Fund. The result was not at all startling. Not one cent was raised.

Meanwhile the original five hundred dollars had remained in the hands of the Trustees of the Bishop's Fund—Judge E. W. Peck, Mr. Isaac Croom, and Mr. H. A. Tayloe—increasing slowly by the yearly addition of interest to principal. By 1849 the sum thus accumulated amounted to \$818. In this year the apathy caused by the two failures of 1845 and 1846 passed away, and new efforts were made to increase the endowment. The responsibility of urging subscriptions was laid upon a single person. Mr. Henry A. Tayloe was appointed to solicit contributions throughout the diocese. A better selection could not have been made. Mr. Tayloe had a wide acquaintance through the State, and at the end of a single year was able to report that he had raised, in cash and in subscriptions in the shape of responsible notes, the sum of \$10,829. Of this amount the two Mobile Churches gave \$2,338, Montgomery \$1,005, Huntsville \$1,060, and St. David's (Dallas County) \$1,185. Mr. Tayloe's entire expense account in collecting these subscriptions was only \$69.70.

The amounts subscribed and paid in were given by one hundred and fifty-eight persons, living in twenty-six different parishes. The subscriptions were cred-

ited by the Convention to the parish and not to the individual.

In connection with these subscriptions the abandoned plan of 1845 was applied to the adjustment of parochial assessments. It was ordered that the Trustees of the Bishop's Fund should collect interest on the cash and notes, and pay it into the treasury of the diocese; that such collections should be counted as so much paid on the diocesan assessment by the parish in which the donor lived; that when the payment of interest in any one year was greater than the parish's assessment for that year, the surplus of interest should be added to the principal of the endowment fund; and that when the annual interest should become equal to the annual assessment the parish should be released from further assessment.

It was a complicated scheme, and in its execution it imposed much labor on the Trustees of the Bishop's Fund; for not only were they required to keep the cash subscriptions of three thousand dollars at interest and in reliable hands, but it was also their duty to keep track of the individual notes, amounting to \$7,837, and collect interest at various times through the entire year. The Treasurer of the diocese was, as his part of the labor, required to keep account of the canonical removal, and the date of removal, of a subscriber from one parish to another, in order to make proper debits and credits on diocesan assessments. Questions of equity in connection with these subscriptions not infrequently demanded the best

judgment not only of the Finance Committee but of the Convention itself.

It was an awkward scheme, yet the only scheme practicable; for the great bulk of these notes, while nominally payable in five years, were not to be paid, it was orally agreed, so long as interest on them was kept up. It was the only practicable scheme, yet a scheme unsafe and unreliable; for another period of general financial stringency such as the country had but recently weathered would render all personal security worthless and leave the subscriptions worth only the paper on which they were written.

But these difficulties were inevitable. The probability of loss was reduced to the minimum by the fact that many of the largest notes were signed by the most responsible men of the state, whose failure to pay would synchronize with stoppage of payment on all securities save those of National issue—men like the Ellerbees and Pegueses, in Dallas county; the Alisons and Lees, of Carlowville; Isaac Croom, and the Pickenses and Stickneys, of Greensboro; R. W. Nicolson and the Minges, of Uniontown and Faunsdale; W. F. Pierce and Alexander Jarvis, of Eutaw; William P. Gould, of Burton's Hill; John Marrast, of Tuscaloosa; F. S. Lyon, of Demopolis; J. M. Robertson, G. P. Beirne, and the Clays, of Huntsville; Emanuel Jones, William M. Garrow, T. Lesesne, and the Battles, of Mobile; and Charles T. Pollard, William Knox, and the Taylors, of Montgomery. These names indicate an array of personal integrity and financial responsibility that fully justified the Trustees in their remark



of 1852: "These notes are believed to be as good as the same number and date can be, taken under like circumstances. If it were proper to collect them, so long as the interest is regularly paid, we doubt very much whether the amount could be invested on any security to make it more safe and reliable than it is at present."

Feeling with the Trustees that the security of these notes could not be increased, even if it were attempted, in violation of explicit understanding to the contrary, to collect them, the Convention endorsed Mr. Tayloe's action, and instructed the Trustees, in accordance with the agreement between him and the subscribers, "to postpone the collection of the principal due upon the notes so long as they were considered good and the interest was annually paid." But in the ensuing year drawers of notes voluntarily took them up to the amount of fourteen hundred dollars. This money, together with the cash subscriptions previously in hand, was lent at eight per cent. to various individuals in sums ranging from twenty-five dollars to eight hundred.

The income from the endowment fund was already almost as great as it is today from a principal more than three times as great. In this as in all other cases safety of investment has been purchased with a portion of the income.

In 1854 the Trustees of the Bishop's Fund drew attention to the distinction between the "Special Fund," whose entire interest was to be paid each year towards the Bishop's salary, and the "Permanent

Fund," which was made up of Christmas offerings, and whose interest was to go entirely to the augmentation of the principal. At this time the permanent fund amounted to \$2,233.34, and the special fund to \$11,979.75.

Renewed effort was now made to increase the endowment. A layman had done noble work before, and now a clergyman was selected—the Rev. Henry C. Lay, of Huntsville. For several months after his appointment Mr. Lay was unable to enter upon the work. But so soon as he began his canvass, in 1855, it became manifest that the Convention had once again made wise choice of an agent. Mr. Lay visited twenty-one congregations, and secured a total amount, above his expenses, of \$11,882. Of this amount \$4,052 was in cash and \$7,830 in notes. Nearly one-fourth of the whole, or \$2,245, was given by parishioners of Christ Church, Mobile. Greensboro stood next, with a subscription of \$1,615, paid in gold, and Montgomery third, with \$1,235. Many of those who had given to the same object ten years before, on Mr. Tayloe's canvass, were even more liberal this time than before. The new list was somewhat more of a popular subscription than the former. Fewer parishes were represented, but the subscribers numbered one hundred and sixty-nine.

The work of the Trustees of the Bishop's Fund was now onerous. About two hundred separate notes had to be watched, both for collection of interest and for proper credit of interest on parochial assessments. On the latter point misunderstanding and complaint

became more frequent than in previous years. As a whole, the method was as cumbersome as the Ptolemaic system of astronomy. In 1856 the Convention forgot the original understanding with subscribers, and attempted to secure simplicity of detail by directing the Trustees to consolidate all notes given by the same person at different times, and as fast as they fell due to collect them and reinvest the proceeds in such securities as seemed both safe and permanent. But if the Convention forgot the agreement that the notes should not be collected so long as interest was paid, the drawers of the notes had a better memory, and the collections were inconsiderable.

In 1858 the Special Fund\* amounted to a little less than \$23,000, of which \$1,700 in cash was not invested; \$4,346 was invested in eight per cent. bonds of the Mobile and Ohio and Alabama and Mississippi (now Alabama Central division of the Southern) railroads. The next year sixteen hundred dollars more of Alabama and Mississippi Railroad bonds were bought, and the following year four thousand dollars was invested in bonds of the Alabama and Florida Railroad.

In this year, 1860, it was evident that trying times were ahead, and the Convention deemed it wise to provide for diocesan interests by refusing to grant further time on the notes, now many years overdue legally, but never due morally. On recommendation of the Finance Committee it began to take in sail by

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\*See page 89.

resolving "That the Trustees of the Bishop's Fund be *positively* instructed to collect all the notes of contributors to the Fund now due." It was one thing for the Convention to pass the resolution; it was another thing to carry the resolution into effect. Ten years later, when the tidal wave of war had rolled back and the few that were not dead or bankrupt had made good their subscriptions, it was found that notes and securities whose face value was \$24,724 were worth less than \$15,000; of which \$5,000 was a note given by the vestry of St. John's parish, Montgomery, secured by a mortgage on Hamner Hall, and destined to be the source of years of contention and of ultimate blessing to the diocese.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE DIOCESAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

IT has ever been a loss to the diocese, a loss that increases with the growth of successive generations, that Church families, living far from organized congregations, waiting long years for the promised coming of a missionary, surrounded by the sectarian bodies whose members, pioneer settlers of the country, had come in sufficient numbers to receive regular ministrations from the beginning, have at last grown hopeless of the Church's ever-deferred mothering, and, impelled by zealous desire to worship God in the company of their fellow-men, or seduced by the specious accusation of Pharisaic righteousness, have at last given the right hand of fellowship to the system of religious opinion prevailing in their immediate vicinity.

In the early days of the diocese this evil was most marked, for these isolated families formed a larger proportion of the entire number of communicants than they now form. As late as 1860 one-fifteenth of the Churchmen of Alabama were thus isolated. It is a moderate estimate that in 1850 the proportion was one-eighth. The necessity for some provision for these families was felt quite as keenly then as now. Alabama Churchmen have always rallied loyally to the call of their leaders, whether to go forward or to hold fast what they already have. From the beginning

the same moving Spirit that impelled the Church in Alabama to seek a head was urging the Churchmen in Alabama to keep whole the Body under the head.

Parishes and clergymen here and there had been spasmodically doing missionary work, but not until 1843 was organized work attempted. In that year the Rev. Messrs. S. S. Lewis of Mobile, F. R. Hanson of Greene county, and J. J. Scott of Livingston, and Messrs. A. B. Winn of Demopolis, and George Cleveland of Mobile, were appointed a committee "to enquire into the expediency of originating a Diocesan Missionary Society, and, if deemed expedient, to report to the next Convention suitable measures to carry the same into effect."

The proposed Society was organized in 1844, on the day before Bishop Cobbs' election. With truly Catholic spirit the very first Article of its Constitution declared that "every baptized member of this Church shall be regarded as a member of this Society." With wisdom and statesmanship that the Church needs to emulate today the method of operations was thus outlined: "Your committee are prepared to recommend the appointment, first, of one general Missionary, who shall visit every portion of the diocese, record the names of Episcopal families wherever he might find them not in communion with existing parishes, baptize their children, etc., and encourage them with the hope that, by proper exertions on their part, they might soon enjoy the services of the Church at regular periods; and do all other things in accordance with his missionary character. Thus new congregations



will be gradually built up throughout the diocese, and whenever one or two parishes felt able, with or without assistance, [to join] in the support of a clergyman, the general Missionary should then give up those parishes, and extend his services to other new places.

\* \* \* We want a man full of Apostolic zeal, and fired with the spirit of that love and devotion to the souls of men which animated the hearts and strengthened the physical energies of the first Evangelists and Missionaries, and, with God's blessing, success will be certain to attend us; and in a short time, instead of one, some five or six missionaries may be in the service of the Society."

How to raise the necessary income—whether by stated offerings or by individual subscriptions—the Committee left for the Convention to determine. The question of method, it felt, was of minor importance. The proper spirit was not, "Let us adopt a method, and try to do this work," but, "Here is a divinely imposed duty. We will do it. How can we do it best?"

When, in due time, this question of method was reached, the Society answered it by calling on parishes instead of individuals, and, without expression of preference, left each parish to determine its own method. This was eminently the wisest course. Only experience could determine the scheme most practicable in Alabama; and it required experience extending through nearly half a century to lead the diocese at large to adopt the present successful system.

The original necessity for an Evangelist vanished

with the coming of Bishop Cobbs. The Bishop was himself the Evangelist, and his example roused the dormant missionary zeal of the clergy to some measure of care for hitherto neglected Churchmen. Consequently the Missionary Society's activity was restricted to supplementing the meager incomes of those who ministered to already established congregations; the distribution of stipends and the allotment of work it reposed entirely in the Bishop's hands. Its income the first year was quite modest, being only \$245, and this sum was divided between two missionaries. This, however, does not represent Alabama's missionary spirit at the time; for in the same year the diocese gave \$600 to the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society; and the total of \$845 was a creditable amount for a diocese of only 663 communicants to give to missionary work in a single year.

The following year the Bishop's appeal for increased liberality toward missionary work in the diocese was answered by an increase of the Society's income to four hundred dollars; and this was the average income until 1860. The missionaries, therefore, numbered only two or three until 1856, when the number was increased to four. The number varied from four to six for the next five years.

Manifestly the Bishop's apportionment to individual missionaries was not overlarge. In 1853 the Rev. J. M. Mitchell, then assisting Bishop Cobbs, in St. John's Church, Montgomery, and in connection with this work doing good service in the mission field of the county, received from the Society fifty dollars; the same amount

was given the Rev. T. A. Morris, working in Jackson county; and the largest beneficiary, the Rev. R. D. Nevius, then a deacon officiating in St. David's Church, Dallas county, received only seventy dollars. In 1857 the stipends ranged between seventy-five and one hundred dollars. In 1859-60 improvement was visible, and the Society's allowances were increased to a minimum of one hundred dollars and a maximum of one hundred and fifty.

This increase was due to a sudden increase of the Society's income from five hundred dollars, towards which it had been slowly growing for several years, to thirteen hundred dollars. That this remarkable increase did not arouse a feeling of thankfulness in the Bishop, but only called forth the statement that "although this is a larger amount than has been contributed in any former year, yet it is obvious that the Bishop can do but little toward strengthening weak parishes and occupying new stations until a much greater sum is put at his disposal," must be attributed solely to his physical ill health, which was now becoming pronounced. The great increase was declarative of new zeal in the Church, and was the first ripple of an increasing flow which told that the brook had become a river. Although the Bishop did not live to see it, the Society's income next year had risen to \$1,500; and all through the trying years of civil war it remained, after the first year, above one thousand dollars.

Seven different missionaries were employed during the last ten years. They were the Rev. Messrs. J. F.

Smith, J. S. Jarratt, F. B. Lee, Edward Denniston, W. M. Bartley, J. A. Wheelock, and J. C. Waddill. The congregations served by them were eighteen in number: Autaugaville and Prattville; Greenville, Letohatchie, and Hayneville; Carlowville; Opelika, Auburn, Yongesboro, and Salem; Tuskegee and Tallassee; Eutaw and Gainesville; and Pushmataha, Butler, Mount Stirling, and Bladon Springs. Some of these congregations are to-day extinct, a few have a service when the Bishop makes his annual visitation, and of those that are provided with regular ministers not one is self-supporting. Movements of population have apparently made futile the missionary work of a generation of work.

But only superficial observers will call that work a failure. The work of Christ, the work of Christ's Church, is rather to establish souls than to establish congregations. If the souls are established the congregations may disappear but are not lost. The missionaries in these villages and towns were the real founders of the churches in Anniston and Birmingham, and were not insignificant factors in the growth of the large congregations in Mobile, Montgomery, and Selma.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE RELIEF OF THE CLERGY.

THE relief of disabled clergy and of the families of deceased clergy was one of the first undertakings that followed the securing of a Bishop. It was deemed the natural condition of the parish priest that he should be married. It was perceived that clerical stipends were not large enough to dispel gloomy forebodings, and that these, increasing with the on-rolling years, beclouded the life and weighed down the heart of the most faithful minister. It was felt that the authority of the Church calling a man to leave all was attended with the responsibility of caring for her servants and their families when the call was obeyed.

It cannot be said that these thoughts led to passionate or even deep-rooted conviction in the minds of many. Most of the Churchmen that felt anything about the matter thought that, as an abstract proposition, it was the right thing for the Church to pension the incapacitated and their dependent families. A few were willing, if occasionally urged, to reduce the principle to action by contributing towards a pension fund. A very few were thoroughly in earnest in the formulation of a scheme by which Alabama should do her duty to her clergy.

In Carlowville, on May 9, 1846, during a recess of the Convention, these last named organized the "Society for the Relief of Disabled Clergy and the

Widows and Orphans of Deceased Clergy." Mr. L. E. Dawson, of Carlowville, was elected President; Judge E. W. Peck, of Tuscaloosa, Vice-President; and Mr. Henry A. Tayloe, of Gallion, Secretary and Treasurer. Its Standing Committee consisted of the Rev. Messrs. F. B. Lee and N. P. Knapp, and Messrs. H. L. Alison, John Ellerbee and John Simpson. All clergymen were members; laymen became members without benefit upon payment of the annual dues of five dollars. A simple but inadequate Constitution was set forth at the primary meeting. It was of no practical importance, for the Society was not incorporated, and for the next seven years had no autonomous existence, being merged, at its own request, into the Convention, which appointed its officers, passed upon all applications, and generally discharged the Society's functions.\*

In 1853 the Convention restored the Society to the autonomy of its original organization; whereupon the Society instantly adopted a new Constitution, and was incorporated by special act of Legislature in February, 1854, thus being put beyond the possibility of further control by the Convention.

The new Constitution of 1853 was an elaborate affair, modeled after that of a like society in the diocese of Maryland. It provided that a layman could become an annual member, always without benefit, on payment of five dollars, but that the clergy must pay ten, twenty, thirty, or forty dollars, yearly, according to the amount of benefit that they desired. When a cler-

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\* See Journal of 1848, page 24.



gyman married more than once he was fined one extra yearly assessment in the year of every such marriage. These assessments were to be the basis of computation for annuities to widows and orphans. Five annual payments entitled them to an annuity three times the amount of the yearly payment, from five to ten annual payments entitled them to an annuity four times the amount of the yearly payment, and so on. The highest annuity was to be that of a member who had made twenty-five annual payments and whose income would thus be eight times his yearly payment of ten, twenty, thirty, or forty dollars—that is, eighty, one hundred and sixty, two hundred and forty, or three hundred and twenty dollars. To the Society's assets—\$1,470—all subsequent donations were to be added, and a special fund created and maintained, apart from the mutual insurance scheme, for the benefit of needy diocesan clergy, whether members or not. Such aid was to be given as the Society might deem proper, but no portion of the Society's special fund was to be expended for the relief of any person whomsoever until it should reach the sum of five thousand dollars, and under no circumstances should the total appropriations of any year exceed the income for the same year.\*

Under this last provision the Society was unable to render aid to any one until 1858, when its capital crossed the line and amounted to \$5,238. Meanwhile it was compelled to deny several applications, notably the application in behalf of the children of Dr. S. S. Lewis. To some these refusals appeared heart-

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\* Journal of 1853, pages 45-48.

less, but they were rendered necessary by the fact that the Society had started without any funds, and therefore must build up an endowment which should ensure the permanency of the work. After an existence of three years the Society had, in 1849, a capital of \$37.16, and its gross income for the entire period had been only \$165. But, following in a small way the plan that its Treasurer, Mr. Tayloe, had adopted to build up the Episcopal endowment two years before, it succeeded in getting several notes signed; and these increased the capital to \$511. Three years later its assets were less than one thousand dollars. Thereafter for several years the growth of the principal though slow was constantly accelerated, the increase being \$400 in 1855, \$700 in 1856, and \$900 in 1857. In the last named year Mr. Tayloe declined longer to act as Treasurer, an office which, in conjunction with that of Secretary, he had held from the Society's organization. The Society divided the two offices, and, leaving Mr. Tayloe Secretary, elected Mr. George P. Beirne, of Huntsville, Treasurer.

At this time North Alabama was developing rapidly, and its chief railroad, the Memphis and Charleston, in which was incorporated the old Tuscumbia and Decatur, offered a good field for investment to those on the ground. Mr. Beirne immediately lent the whole of the Society's available assets—\$5,038—to the Memphis and Charleston Railroad Company, at eight per cent. For three years he operated in investments in this road, and then, in 1860, was able to announce that the Society's assets had grown to \$14,-

123, of which \$6,262 were the profits of the past year. This growth was so remarkable that it merits closer examination:

In 1857 Mr. Beirne purchased \$1,000 worth of stock in the road for \$750; on this stock a sixty per cent. dividend was declared on December 1—a clear profit of \$850 on an investment of \$750 in less than one year. Mr. Beirne had previously added to his original loan to the road, which now owed him \$6,300; this loan was next exchanged for bonds of the value of \$7,000, and these bonds were shortly exchanged for stock of the same face value. All these transactions were completed before December 1, 1859, and the stock thus secured received the same sixty per cent. dividend that the former block received—a clear profit of \$4,900 on an investment of \$6,300 in less than one year. The remaining increase of \$512 was an additional four per cent. dividend on the Society's five hundred and twelve shares of Memphis and Charleston stock.

In another year the assets were \$16,901.57. Success always brings greater success. So soon as a fund begins to grow people are more liberal to it than when it is a puny infant. So soon as fortunate investments sent the Society's income bounding upward enthusiasm became contagious. Annual contributors increased in one year from twenty-nine to fifty-two, and the year after to sixty-seven. St. Paul's, Carlowville, took the initiative when, in 1857, the parish gave the Society five hundred dollars. At the instance of the Rev. Henry C. Lay, the Society at once

resolved that the heirs of the rector of that parish, the Rev. F. B. Lee, should at his death "be entitled to receive the largest annuity allowed to a member of the forty-dollar class"—*i. e.*, \$320. In 1860 Mr. N. H. R. Dawson, who had in the preceding year been elected President, on Bishop Cobbs' declination to serve longer, made the Society another payment of five hundred dollars to its insurance department, specifying as beneficiaries of this sum for nine years each in the ten-dollar class the Rev. Messrs. F. B. Lee, J. M. Mitchell, G. F. Cushman, J. H. Ticknor, and William A. Stickney.

So at the beginning of the Civil War the Society was in a condition to relieve the clergy of much anxiety and their families of more distress.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CHURCH SCHOOLS.

FOR nothing else did Bishop Cobbs so earnestly plead and work throughout his episcopate as for a diocesan institution wherein the future mothers of the diocese might, together with their secular education, drink in the principles of Church teaching and Christian living. In nothing else were his attempts so long frustrated and his hopes so often dashed. Not till three years before his death was the final and successful movement set on foot. Not till three months before his death did he see of the travail of his soul.

The first attempt was made in 1845, and Tuscaloosa, the capital of the state and the residence of the Bishop, was the field chosen. In October of this year the Rev. Aristides S. Smith, an old friend of the Bishop's in the days of his Virginia ministry, was induced by the Bishop to establish a Girls' School in Tuscaloosa, and in addition to become assistant to the Bishop, who had become rector of the parish in the summer of that year. At the Bishop's earnest suggestion the Convention of 1846 appointed a Board of Trustees of a "Female Institute," to be under the control of the Church in Alabama. While the Convention did not in so many words undertake to erect Mr. Smith's school, a private venture, into a diocesan institution, yet the personnel of the Board of Trustees—all the appointees, Judge E. W. Peck, H. A.

Snow, C. M. Foster, E. F. Comegys, Charles Snow, A. Lynch, and Dr. S. G. Leach, being residents of Tuskaloosa—shows conclusively that such was its intention. But Mr. Smith's sojourn in Alabama was too short to get a diocesan institution into working order. After two years he moved on to Columbus, Miss., whence after four years he returned to Virginia. After his departure no attempt was made to keep the school open.

A diocesan school for boys, which should be a nursery for the Ministry of the next generation, was Bishop Cobbs' next attempt. An opportunity presented itself in 1847. Some of the Bishop's friends in the neighborhood of Greene Springs made him the very liberal proposition to purchase and present to him the Greene Springs property (subsequently famous as Prof. Tutwiler's Greene Springs Academy), the only condition being that the Bishop should establish himself there and give the school his personal supervision in the intervals of his Episcopal visitations. The proposition was the more liberal in that they who made it were not Churchmen. The Bishop, however, felt that it would be imprudent for him to remove from the capital and obligate himself to personal conduct of the school, and regretfully declined the proposition.

Less than two years later, on January 2, 1849, the project became an attractive but evanescent reality in the foundation at Tuskaloosa of a "Classical Institute and Mission School" for boys and young men. The plan on which the school was to be conducted



had been carefully digested, and, could it have been carried out, would have worked an almost miraculous change in the missionary operations and parochial life of the diocese.

It seems to have been suggested by the recent success of James Lloyd Breck's venture at Nashotah, and, with allowance for schools of Churchmanship, was projected on parallel lines. A classical and a theological department were organized. Theological students could pay their expenses by teaching in the classical department a few hours each day. Pupils were regarded not merely as seekers after secular knowledge, but as catechumens preparing for Confirmation and strong, healthy Christian living. The Prayer Book was a daily text-book. Daily Morning and Evening Prayer were said, and the entire school attended divine services whenever the parish church was opened. The faculty and theological students acted as missionaries in the ecclesiastically destitute regions that extended nearly forty miles in every direction. The Bishop was assisted in this undertaking by the principal and wheel-horse, the Rev. Charles F. Peake, and by the ushers, Mr. George F. Cushman, a candidate for Orders, and Mr. George W. Stickney, who entered the Ministry a few years later. Two theological students and twenty-two classical pupils made up the first year's enrollment. Tuition fees amounting to about four hundred dollars, and a subscription of one hundred and fifty dollars from a few Northern friends of the project, made up the income, which was applied to fitting up the school

building—the famous old “Mansion House,” now the parish rectory. The boarding department was to be limited to twenty-five boys. Charges for tuition and board were to be kept at a level with necessary expenses and to be reduced whenever a reduction should be found practicable. It was held that this was a missionary school, conducted by missionaries, intended to do a missionary work, and that under no circumstances should the ideal be prostituted to lower ends. A few laymen of Tuskaloosa gave the buildings free of rent the first year, and, the Capitol having been changed to Montgomery, the old State House was offered rent-free for the ensuing year. The prospect was most encouraging, when, in July of the same year, after only six months’ operation, the school was closed by the death of the burden-bearer, Mr. Peake. Another Peake has never arisen in Alabama.

In the summer of 1850 the project of a diocesan Girls’ School in Tuskaloosa was revived. The Rev. William Johnson, a man of fierce, unyielding temper, was chosen as principal, and the school was opened in September. The patronage of the school not yielding Mr. Johnson an adequate support, Bishop Cobbs resigned the rectorship of the parish, to which, on his recommendation, Mr. Johnson was elected. At first the Bishop gave the school strong endorsement, and for a time it grew in numbers and reputation. But soon dissensions arose between principal and pupils, and then between rector and vestry. The Bishop ceased to refer to the school in any public manner. In June, 1854, the vestry requested Mr. Johnson to

resign the rectorship of the parish. He refused. The vestry promptly dismissed him, and, after one disorderly public service at which Mr. Johnson aired his personal grievances from the chancel floor and was immediately rebuked by several prominent parishioners, nailed up the church doors against him. The vestry's action in ousting the rector was uncanonical, but the rector's precedent action had been unwise, and the action of the former was, in December, ratified by the Bishop on the ground that reconciliation had proven impossible. A portion of the congregation followed Mr. Johnson for a few months to the old State Capitol, three blocks from the church, and subsequently to a chapel which he erected five miles east of Tuscaloosa, where he continued public services about six months longer. But without his salary as rector, and with school patronage much injured by the parochial contention, Mr. Johnson was unable to continue operations, and the end of his rectorship was virtually the extinction of the school.

The Bishop was still unwilling to confess that Alabama could not support a Church school for Church girls. After waiting two years he again reverted to this fond desire, and in his Convention address of 1857 urged the Convention to give it prompt and efficient attention. This request was referred to a committee consisting of the Rev. Messrs. J. M. Banister and F. R. Hanson, of the clergy, and Messrs. Charles T. Pollard, A. W. Ellerbee, and A. R. Bell, of the laity. The committee reported favorably upon the

Bishop's communication, and suggested that a committee be appointed with power to act as they deemed most expedient to further the establishment of a diocesan seminary. This committee, on whom devolved all the preliminary labors, consisted of the Bishop, as Chairman; the Rev. J. M. Mitchell, and Messrs. Samuel G. Jones and Thomas B. Taylor—all of Montgomery.

The committee went vigorously to work, and returned to the next Convention with a report which the Finance Committee endorsed and the Convention adopted by unanimous vote. Feeling that the preceding failures to establish permanently a girls' school had been due largely to the smallness of the population from which day-pupils could be drawn, the Committee had decided that the school must be located in a larger place than Tuscaloosa, and they had settled upon Montgomery. There, just beyond the corporate limits, west of the town, they had purchased a grove of nearly ten acres, at a cost of six thousand dollars. Nearly the whole of this amount they had already raised in Montgomery by popular subscription, and they expected to raise there fully ten thousand dollars. They called on the remainder of the diocese for twenty thousand dollars more, with which to erect suitable buildings. They expected to lay the foundations and press forward the work so soon as the funds in hand should warrant a beginning. They recommended that, in order to secure a competent principal at the outset, the school be leased free of charge to the most

worthy applicant, the Board of Trustees to determine availability.

The following year the committee were able to report that Montgomery had raised not ten, but fifteen thousand dollars, and they promised that this should be increased to twenty thousand dollars if the remainder of the diocese would raise the same amount. Already the Rev. J. Avery Shepherd had opened a girls' school in Montgomery, and was holding himself in readiness to accept the principalship of the "Diocesan Female Seminary."

All preliminary work having been done, the Convention discharged the committee and elected as Trustees of the school Dr. T. B. Taylor, Mr. Charles T. Pollard, Mr. Samuel G. Jones, and the Rev. J. M. Mitchell, their terms of office being respectively one, two, three, and four years, and each trustee's successor to be elected for a term of four years. By instruction of the Convention these Trustees proceeded to make themselves a body corporate.

By the articles of subscription the Trustees were directed to make the first lease of the school for two years, and free of rent. Under this agreement the school was opened by the Rev. Mr. Shepherd, in October, 1860. The unsettled condition of the country had caused delay in the erection of the contemplated buildings, but a commodious dwelling-house was rented for the boarding department and an adjoining house for school purposes. The first day's enrollment was good, and the number of pupils increased

so rapidly that by the middle of the scholastic year both the day-school and the boarding department had reached their utmost limit. The necessarily heavy expenses of the first year were fully covered by the income. The school was a success.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### PERSONNEL OF THE CLERGY.

THERE were giants in the earth in those days.

It were the part of unwisdom to say that those old times were better than these; but it were also the error of dim vision to ascribe the ante-bellum development of the Church in Alabama to Bishop Cobbs alone. The greatest of generals can do nothing if he head a mob of weaklings and cowards. The most devoted of Bishops is powerless without the support of loyal and able clergy to do the parochial work which, in the sum total, constitutes the work of the diocese.

A review of the early history of the diocese discloses a galaxy of clerical strength out of all proportion to the diocesan firmament, and the strongest testimony to the mental vigor and spiritual force and theological acuteness of the Bishop is that he so promptly asserted and so increasingly manifested his ability to lead such men and was so lovingly followed by them. Young men the great majority of them were, and, the few patriarchs excepted, their average age was less than thirty-five years. But Lewis, Knapp, Hanson, Lay, Lee, Pierce, Massey, Cushman, Ingraham, Mitchell, and Stickney, were a company of clergy that any prelate might well feel honored to lead. If, as we call the roll, the names of some are strange to our ears, it is only because no historian has

arisen to declare what they dared and did. Others were springing into prominence—Banister, Nevius, S. U. and J. F. Smith, Cobbs, and Everhart—but their best work belongs to a later period, and may not now be described.

Two of the clergy were elevated to the Episcopal bench—Henry C. Lay and Henry N. Pierce. Of these two it is proper to speak first.

Mr. Lay, Virginia-born, had been a deacon only six months when, in 1847, he came to Alabama, and at the age of twenty-three was placed by the Bishop in charge of the Church of the Nativity, Huntsville. His attainments are attested by the sources of his doctorates, both Hobart College and William and Mary conferring D.D. on him, in 1857 and 1873 respectively, and Cambridge University LL.D. in 1867. His whole priestly life until October 23, 1859, when he was consecrated Missionary Bishop of Arkansas and Indian Territory, was spent in Huntsville. He found that parish with nineteen communicants, and left it twelve years later with ninety-one. He found a four-thousand-dollar church building, and left a beautiful structure costing thirty-five thousand dollars. Throughout his rectorship he regularly catechized the children in public, and preached to them twice in the month. Every Sunday night he preached to a large congregation of slaves. He made Huntsville a center of missionary activity from which, with the assistance of two resident clergymen, a priest and a deacon, he provided for services in the counties of Madison, Limestone, Jackson, and Morgan. He was, as we

have seen\*, appointed second canvasser for the increase of the Episcopal endowment, and in a single year raised about twelve thousand dollars. In diocesan Conventions he was a prominent figure, being generally chairman of the Committee on the State of the Church, a committee that had not then been robbed of its importance by the creation of a Committee on Parochial Reports. In respect of conciseness, force, and freedom from vague generalities, his reports are worthy of imitation. The following passage, taken from his report of 1857, in which he is pleading for diocesan *esprit du corps*, is a fair example of his style: "The blessed sunshine itself illumines all the world, and yet spends itself chiefly on those objects nearest and most exposed thereto. So must we concentrate our energies and our affections on that which is peculiarly our own work. Could each minister love his parish with that exclusive affection which a good man entertains for his wife—could we have in each diocese something corresponding to what is so well known in the world as 'State Pride'—could our people, not despising the day of small things, take a lively interest in all things diocesan, merely because they are diocesan—we should be a Macedonian phalanx, hard to be broken and formidable in its aggressions."

The other presbyter of this period who was elevated to the Episcopate was the present Bishop of Arkansas, the Rt. Rev. Henry N. Pierce, who, though a Rhode Islander, exercised nearly his whole ministry in the

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\* Page 90.

South. He came to Alabama, and to St. John's Church, Mobile, in 1857, and remained rector of that parish eleven years. Only three of these years are within our present purview, but in that short period St. John's made great strides. Not only the communicants increased from ninety to one hundred and thirty-four, and the yearly baptisms from twenty-eight to seventy-seven, but the debt on the rectory was paid, the average income rose to more than five thousand dollars, the church building was enlarged to a total seating capacity of eight hundred, and five thousand dollars was raised for the founding of the Church Home for Orphans in Mobile. Mr. Pierce did not become a prominent figure in diocesan consultations—indeed, men whose recreation is to work in Calculus seldom do—but he expended all of his great energy upon the absorbing work of his developing parish. The University of Alabama conferred D. D. on him in 1862.

Though mentioned first these future Bishops were neither first in point of time nor pre-eminent in point of ability among the old-time worthies.\* Samuel Smith Lewis was the first in time, and remained until his death senior presbyter and "Father of the Diocese." Born in Vermont in 1805, and educated at Washington (now Trinity) College, Hartford, Conn., he entered upon his first charge, Christ Church, Tus-

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\* It is very comforting to the clergy that have not become Bishops to think that the Episcopate does not monopolize clerical ability. Elections by diocesan conventions mean sometimes this and sometimes that.

kaloosa, in 1832. His work here, he confessed, was eminently unsatisfactory, seventeen of the twenty-eight communicants removing to other places within a few months. He went so far as to suggest to the vestry the advisability of abandoning the attempt to establish a congregation, but the vestry refused to entertain such a proposition and insisted that the parish would soon come upon brighter days. Mr. Lewis' discouragement would probably not have been so great but for deep-seated lung-trouble which had already declared itself. For nearly three years he fought it, and then, in the summer of 1835, he gladly accepted a call to Christ Church, Mobile. Here he remained until 1846, when his rapidly failing health compelled him to desist from all active work. During the Church's acephalous period Mr. Lewis was always President of the Diocesan Conventions, until at the last, the Convention of 1844, when he felt physically unable to perform the duties of the office. Until 1846 he was constantly President of the Standing Committee. Missionary work he felt unable to do. He refused to leave his parish "for any purpose save the reinstatement of his health," but in his parish, which though of moderate size in comparison with present day parishes in Alabama, was the largest in the diocese, his single-hearted devotedness was unsparing of bodily ease, and he was eager to spend and to be spent in the service of his flock. His duties were performed with burning zeal and wasting application. His conscientiousness led him into a prodigal expenditure of his strength, shortening his life, and bringing him to

the grave at the early age of forty-four. He died during the rectorship of the Rev. Mr. Knapp, and was buried beneath the chancel of Christ Church, where a handsome tablet marks his resting-place. The text of the funeral discourse delivered by Mr. Knapp was strikingly appropriate: "Hold such in reputation; because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life."

The Rev. Nathaniel P. Knapp was the second giant of this earlier period. He came from New York, from a tutorship in the General Theological Seminary, in 1837, and, settling in Lowndes county, founded St. Peter's Church, at Benton, in January, 1838.\* That this congregation was not a great tax upon his energies may be inferred from a brief note in his report to the Convention: "Number of communicants, so far as ascertained, two." From this circumscribed field he was called, after four or five months, to Tuskaloosa. Here he succeeded the Rev. Andrew Matthews, whose private character and public reputation had not materially improved the possibilities of parochial growth or of ministerial ease. But though the parish was small, the communicants ranging in number between fourteen and twenty-one, year by year, the growth during Mr. Knapp's rectorship was constant. In 1843 Mr. Knapp resigned charge of the parish at Tuskaloosa and went North. Here he fell in with Mr. Lewis, whose parishioners had sent him thither for recreation. It was a summer of dread-

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\* This church was the foundation of that which now exists at Tyler's Station, nine miles west.



ful suffering in Mobile, yellow fever being epidemic. Knowing the condition of Mr. Lewis' health, Mr. Knapp promptly offered and successfully urged himself as Mr. Lewis' substitute in Mobile for the remainder of the summer. In Mobile he worked indefatigably and shunned no exposure, until he himself was stricken down. After a serious illness, Mr. Lewis having returned and the plague abated, he went to Cuba for the winter, and on his return became rector of St. John's, Montgomery. Here his rectorship of four years was most successful. His indomitable will and comprehensive grasp of events is well illustrated by an incident that occurred in the religious life of the town: Late in the summer of 1845 a wave of mental and spiritual excitement swept through Montgomery, attending and following a great "revival." Every congregation was affected, and in St. John's parish wide-spread sympathy with the revival was engendered. Had a less able man been rector of the parish, it is conceivable that, in view of his congregation's condition, he would have pursued one of two courses, according to his theological bias: Either he would have joined in the union revival meetings, or he would have inveighed against the whole idea of revivals. Alabama clergy have been known to do both. Mr. Knapp did neither. His unqualified unbelief in a man-made ministry, and his abhorrence of schism, even when but hereditary, forbade him to go with the revivalists. And his conviction, that beneath the waves of commotion that agitated the community there was an undercurrent which, by its deep and

steady flow, marked the brooding of the Holy Spirit, rendered it impossible for him to set himself in opposition. But set as a watchman in Israel, and purposing to keep his own congregation from being driven about by every wind of doctrine, he foregrasped the coming Advent-tide, multiplied the services of the Church, visited from house to house and held cottage prayer-meetings, and, continuing thus six hours a day for three months, not only prevented the loss to the parish of its more emotional members, but actually turned the tide and greatly increased both the numerical and the spiritual strength of his congregation. In two years the number of communicants had quadrupled; for, with an uncompromising loyalty to the Church, Mr. Knapp had the rare faculty of bending all circumstances, whether favorable or hostile, to the furtherance of the Kingdom. In 1848 he entered upon the rectorship of Christ Church, Mobile, following Mr. Lewis' successor, the Rev. Francis Priolean Lee, who had died, a victim to yellow fever, after a brief but brilliant rectorship of only ten months. Though lacking the fine physique and personal magnetism of these two predecessors, Mr. Knapp fell not one whit behind them in both the excellence and the acceptability of his labors. He died here in the harness in 1851.\*

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\* Fifty-nine of his sermons, edited by the Rev. William Johnson, were published in a very large royal octavo volume of five hundred pages in 1855. They are of widely varying degrees of excellence. Mr. Knapp's reputation would have been the better upheld had the volume been one-third as large.

These two men, Lewis and Knapp, were head and shoulders above their contemporaries. Of Lewis, Bishop Cobbs bore witness "that by his sound Evangelical preaching, by his holy walk and conversation, and by his ardent zeal and devotion, he had contributed more than any other one man towards building up the Church in Alabama." Of his "old and beloved friend," Mr. Knapp, the Bishop said: "He had contributed not a little to the moulding of the diocese's character, being a sound, well-balanced theologian, a thoroughly conservative Churchman, and a most faithful, practical and evangelical preacher."

Of the other prominent clergy of this period not much needs, or can, be said. Their lives were devoid of sensational events. Year after year they labored quietly and faithfully, not sounding a trumpet before their good deeds. The recollections of their survivors are vague and unsatisfactory, and the written records are painfully meager. Scanty parochial reports, incidental remarks, and allusions by the Bishop, give momentary, phantom-like glimpses of those strong personalities. Hanson, the patient missionary of Greene and Marengo; Lee, the pious, far-seeing builder of St. Paul's, Carlowville; Massey, the indefatigable "proselyter" of Mobile, founder of St John's and rector of Trinity; Cushman, the cheerful and scholarly incumbent of Cahaba; Ingraham, the Biblical student, whose "Pillar of Fire," "Throne of David," and "Prince of the House of David," will live long in literature, to the shame of those who, though following the path blazed out by him, have

followed but to wrest Scripture to their readers' destruction; Mitchell, the Bishop's right arm in the rapidly growing parish of St. John's, Montgomery; and Stickney, of Marion, the most advanced Churchman and successful educator in Alabama;—these are men whose deeds live after them, and whose memory is fragrant, though they did the work of the Master without ostentation and left behind them no connected story of their lives.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE THEOLOGICAL TONE.

THE character of a diocese is as real as the character of an individual. There may be inharmonious elements here and there, but a composite photograph gives the mental and spiritual characteristics in clear-cut lines. Thus, no one would mistake the Churchmanship of Virginia for that of Fond du Lac, although the theology of scattered individuals in each diocese differs from the theology of the other diocese by less than any appreciable quantity.

So in this diocese, despite the few extreme teachers that have arisen on either wing, there is a tone of theology and Churchmanship that has never changed in essence, however much the expression of it has changed to grapple with new conditions. "Alabama Churchmanship" is regarded in Virginia as having Romish tendencies, and in Fond du Lac as being little better than Episcopated Sectarianism. But in truth, while Rome is not its goal, neither is Geneva its anti-Christ.

As now, so in the episcopate of the first Bishop, Alabama held that the *via media* was both the *via salutis* and the *via veritatis*. The theology of the Early Fathers of the diocese was in harmony with that of their diocesan. They chose him because he was of their poise. He stamped his own theology upon the diocese, in congregations and in his young clergy,

and the stamp has been repeated and the impression deepened by his successors and theirs.

It should not be forgotten that this was a time of alarm and contention in the national Church and in many diocesan households. The inevitable leaning of democratic Americans towards a man-made democratic "church," and their abhorrence of all imperialism, but especially of papal imperialism, marked with the mark of the Beast, was intensified by the recent developments in the Church of England, precipitated by Newman's famous "Tract 90," and resulting in more than three hundred clerical, and an unknown number of lay, defections to the Church of Rome. Everywhere men were looking for tendencies, tendencies were all presupposed to be Romeward, and the slightest departure from established ecclesiastical customs was viewed with alarmed suspicion.

Consequently many of the Bishop's warnings, in sermon and in pastoral, were directed against the introduction of any novel practices, however innocent, in the conduct of services. The so-called "Catholicity" of Mediæval Europe received many a hard rap from him; but so also did that spurious liberality which condones sectarianism and declares that "one church is as good as another." The Bishop was not an alarmist, and his clearheaded diagnosis of the ecclesiastical situation in 1848 must have given much comfort to the faint-hearted. His conviction was that more uniformity in doctrine existed than might be inferred from many of the publications that were so frequently appearing. "True it is," he acknowledged,



“that there is diversity of opinion; but it is not so much because fundamental errors are held and taught, but because of the giving of undue prominence to some particular doctrines which some men, from education, position, or association, consider of peculiar importance—and who thus, whilst they do not deny, yet undervalue or partially present other doctrines of equal obligation.”

“There may be those,” he goes on, “who entertain low and defective views of the Church, her Ministry, and her Sacraments; but this class is constantly becoming more and more decided and conservative in their principles and their practices. There may be those who are ultra in their views; who attach a superstitious and semi-papistical value to ordinances; who indulge in much affectation and cant about primitive Catholicity; who, though oftentimes but novices in the Church, take upon themselves to be wiser expounders of the Articles and Offices than the aged, learned, and godly men who framed the Prayer Book: yet this class of men, holding views so grossly inconsistent with the standards of the Church, and being so extremely ridiculous by their pharisaical and sanctimonious observances of various little peculiarities, will either gradually be rebuked by the good common-sense and the sound evangelical piety of the Church, or in extreme cases will ultimately pass over to a more corrupt and congenial communion. I would again repeat it as my firm belief, that the great body of the Church is sound not only in regard to the doctrines taught in the Offices of the Prayer Book, but to those

great fundamental truths embodied in the Articles and Homilies."

The defection of Bishop Ives of North Carolina called forth a new deliverance from Bishop Cobbs, who viewed the perversion with mortification and shame for the Church, but used the occasion to inculcate a lesson. "There may have been too much boasting and self-glorification on our part," he wrote, "too much overvaluing of Sacraments and Ordinances; and not enough of the faithful preaching of Christ crucified, too much departing from the Protestant principle of the Church as established at the Reformation, too much relaxing of Christian morals in the way of apology for worldly conformity, and too much of sympathy and of tampering with Romish books, with Romish doctrines, and with Romish usages. \* \* \* Let us, therefore, take in good part this chastisement, and learn to be more prayerful, more humble, more faithful, more devoted, and more holy. And let us not be driven from distinctive principles by the occasional defection of those who have gone out from us because they were not of us."

Again and again did the Bishop seek to impress upon the clergy that the charity for whose sake truth must be suppressed was in character spurious and in benefit ephemeral. In 1849 he wrote: "The doctrine that it is a matter of indifference whether people belong to the One, True, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, or to any Christian organization of human origin, is one pregnant with fearful evil, and one that should be boldly met and frankly and fully exposed.

However this doctrine may be praised and admired under the specious name of liberality, yet it is one which naturally terminates in an indifference to all religion, and not infrequently leads to open infidelity. If, then, we really regard the Church as a divine institution, let it be fully and openly avowed; let men be urged to be united with it as a duty which they owe to God; let there be no compromising of her claims for the sake of expediency, and no merging of her means and her influence with other associations. In this way, our children and the members of our congregation will grow up intelligent, devoted, and confirmed members of the Church. They will be interested in her welfare, they will be grounded and settled in the faith once delivered to the saints, and will be less in danger of falling into schism, either in the direction of Rome or of sectarianism."

If the Bishop seemed to dwell unduly upon the distinctive rites, customs, and doctrines of the Church, he was fully warranted in doing so by the real sympathy of many of the laity for the unformulated and effusive liturgy of sectarianism, towards which they felt the more closely drawn the nearer the clergy seemed to approach the *opus operatum* of Roman sacramentarianism. He had to steer clear of both Scylla and Charybdis, to nourish evangelical piety without arousing schismatic tendencies, and to encourage the seeking of sacramental grace without infusing a trust in the mere mechanism of a bodily deed. To impress upon the diocese the due proportion of the faith required constant iteration and re-

iteration. But while he encouraged conservatism and rebuked extremism he put alarmists out of court very gently but very firmly. A certain clergyman, in whose soundness, sincerity, and ability he had full confidence, was accused to him of monkish and Romish practices. Among other counts it was charged with especial gravity that he frequently castigated himself. "Does he?" answered the Bishop; "Is that the worst? Then we must forgive him. If he does his own whipping depend upon it he will never get near so much as he deserves."

But the theology of the Bishop had to do with the pastoral relation as well as with the ecclesiastical. He insisted that it was the duty of the clergy personally to care for the children and the slaves and to train them in the doctrines of Christ and the Church. For ceremonialism, for merely formal relationship to the Church, for faith without faith-evincing works, he had a Christ-like contempt. Any teaching of the "wider hope" that encouraged men in the belief that, after serving the god of this world all the days of their life, they are to be made fit for heaven by a little penitential sorrow in their last moments, he characterized as "an awful thing." Support of the work of the Church, in parish and in diocese, he held to be a duty, whose performance was not to be complimented as liberality, but whose neglect was to be reprehended as sin. This support was to be not merely in money but also in personal service, and service must be to God's glory, not to the glory of self. In neglect of this principle he found the cause of parochial schisms.

“Did you ever notice how fond the Devil is of the Church?” he asked Mr. Lay one day in a stage-coach, after striving ineffectually all of the preceding day to adjust a parochial controversy. “I have been at a great many gatherings, from General Conventions down to vestry meetings, and I always find the Devil present, and wonderfully zealous for the Church. He whispers in the ear of this one and that, ‘So far as you are personally concerned it would be well to be meek and gentle, but, my dear friend, consider the Church, consider the interests of evangelical truth;’ and so he persuades them into complacent pharisaism. As I was saying,” he resumed after a short nap, “the Devil is a great apothecary. He knows we won’t take his poison with the true name upon it, so he bottles it up and labels it in big letters ‘Principle;’ and, oh! how poor sinners will indulge in pride, willfulness, party spirit, and selfishness, boasting all the while of their zeal for principle.”\* Very persistently and aggressively did he contend against theatre-going and ball-room dancing, and, while he did not censoriously judge those whose profession was to teach dancing, he distinctly affirmed that he would not confirm a dancing-master.

With the constant pressure of such teaching upon clergy and people for sixteen years, the Churchmanship of the diocese in those days is not a matter for discussion. Though many of the clergy are now spoken of as “old-fashioned High-Churchmen,” they

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\* This anecdote is given in Bishop Lay’s *Church Review* memories of Bishop Cobbs.



differed from new-fashioned High-Churchmen only in frowning upon a ritualism that seemed both ill-advised and corrupting. The services were, no doubt, painfully bare, and the music was execrable, but the trumpet gave no uncertain sound. Six years before Bishop Cobbs came to Alabama the Committee on the state of the Church could say: "When the Church has been exhibited, it has been as *The Church*; and as such is it still called for."\* Lewis and Knapp have indeed been denominated "Low-Churchmen,"† but no one that has carefully read their published writings can so place them. Lewis affirmed that (1) Christ established a Church, (2) organized its ministry, (3) ordained its Sacraments and Ordinances, (4) and that these all were to be perpetuated to the end of the world; he only protested (and who does not agree with him?) that Church, ministry, and sacraments were not the end but the means to the end, which was "Salvation to all who place their trust in Christ." Knapp's Churchmanship is forever placed beyond question by these words from his published sermon on the text "The Lord added daily to the Church such as should be saved": "The Gospel never was designed to be preached independently of the Church—nor can it be, for the Church is part of the Gospel. \* \* \* We maintain that in order to be entitled to call ourselves and the communion to which we belong 'members of the Church' we must have the same doctrines and ordinances that the first

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\* Journal of 1838, page 17.

† Christ Church, Mobile, Year Book for 1883, page 43.



Christians had, and be in fellowship with the Apostles through the pervading bond of a ministry derived from them; that is, through the Apostolical Succession. That we have this succession, this connecting bond, we can distinctly prove, as clearly as we prove the divine origin of our religion."

Such is the clear-cut, decisive teaching that Bishop and Priests alike gave the Churchmen of Alabama in the fourth and fifth decades of the present century. Much vaguer teaching was occasionally heard; but it was this definiteness and dogmatism, this doctrine tangible enough for the people to grasp, that commended itself to the hearers; and it was these courageous ministers, who did not hesitate to preach the truth in love, that reaped the most bounteous harvests in their own day and left the most fruitful fields of the present generation.

## CHAPTER XV.

### PARISH LIFE.

DOMESTIC details reveal character more truthfully than do widely-heralded deeds wrought before the public gaze. The gossip and small-talk of parish life tell us much that never comes to light in the study of diocesan institutions and of ecclesiastical development. To these it is purposed to turn for a while.

Only once in this episcopate did the diocese attempt to intermeddle in affairs strictly pastoral, parochial, or personal. In 1849 the Convention received, as part of a new system of canons, a series of provisions entitled "Of Lay Discipline." The four canons of the series provided: (1) That every communicant should have daily family prayers; (2) That heads of families should instruct those under them, and send their children to the minister's catechetical instructions; (3) That notorious transgressors should be excluded, as from Holy Communion, so from Sponsorship; and (4) That the names of confirmed persons neglecting the Lord's Supper for the space of twelve months should be stricken from the roll of communicants. This attempt to enforce natural duty and to supersede pastoral responsibility by legislative enactment received short shrift from the Convention of 1850, when the canons were finally acted upon. Only the fourth provision met with favor; it was in force just one year,

and no similar experiment in legislation has since been attempted.

The question, What constitutes a communicant? met with more uncertain response than than meets it now. The present substitution of the words "Confirmed Persons" for the word "Communicant" was not often made in those days. A communicant was, in general, not merely a potential communicant; he was an actual participant in the Supper of the Lord. Consequently the number of confirmed persons residing in a parish cannot be determined from records extant. Neither are we assisted in arriving at the approximate number of the confirmed by the fact that actual communicants are about seventy-five per cent. of the confirmed, for not only was the distinction between confirmed persons and de facto communicants not universal, but we cannot say positively what clergymen made the distinction and what did not. The only inference that can be made reasonably is, that a parish reporting twenty communicants was larger than is a parish reporting the same number to-day; but how much larger, it is impossible to estimate.

Of course the universal American custom of "calling" ministers held sway from the beginning. In many parishes it was the custom to call a minister for a single year.\* If he was liked he was re-elected from year to year. If he was not liked he was quietly dropped when the term of partnership expired, and another minister was chosen. In this way the awkward-

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\* This is still the nominal custom in St. Thomas' Church, Greenville.

ness of asking a clergyman to resign and the cruelty of starving him into resigning were alike avoided. The hottest-headed partisan was, as a rule, able to wait a few months. Dr. Lewis was thus elected rector of Christ Church, Mobile, eleven times.

The ministerial salary, not over-large in prospect, was oftentimes even smaller in realization. Not a few of the clergy were compelled to eke out their salary by adding school-teaching to their clerical duties. Some of the clergy must have welcomed a bright Sunday morning and a large congregation with somewhat more than spiritual joy, for their whole support came from the unpledged Sunday offerings of the congregation. Others whose stipends were fixed did not for a considerable period state the amount in their annual reports, excusing themselves on the ground that this was a private parochial arrangement to which it would be indelicate to refer publicly.

However hard this training, this combination of secular duties with ministerial, it was beneficial in that the Body Ecclesiastical in Alabama was, in the fullest measure, a "teaching Church." Parochial schools were multiplied, and in them were laid the foundations of Christian life and belief. The times were especially propitious for such schools, as no scheme of common-school education at public expense had yet been broached, and the schools were long in a flourishing condition in many places, notably in Mobile, Montgomery, Tuskaloosa, and Marion. In the last-named place the Rev. W. A. Stickney's school was especially successful, numbering more than eighty

pupils and having a standing list of applicants for vacancies year after year.\* Trinity Church, Mobile, conducted a free school which numbered more than a hundred pupils. Christ Church, Tuskaloosa, was never without its parish school. Much religious instruction was given in the Rev. Mr. Cook's school at Talladega.

The operation of these schools brought about more frequent services throughout the diocese. It was a short step from brief devotional exercises in the school-house to public prayer in the church or chapel, and this step at least three congregations had taken by 1854—Montgomery, Tuskaloosa, and Marion. Daily Morning Prayer was said in these parishes, and in Marion more than three hundred services were held in a single year. The example of these parishes was followed more or less closely in places where there were no parochial schools.

That was not the Golden Age of parish finances. Parishes lived upon their daily bread and were never known to gather more than enough for their immediate necessities. The economic principle that a college that does its work properly is always on the verge of bankruptcy was applied to the work of a parish. One source of embarrassment remained for many years. Quite a number of churches had been built on a kind of joint-stock plan; that is, instead of giving

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\* The name of the school was "St. Wilfred's." The name of the parish was at first "St. Michael's," but at the time of its incorporation, in 1853, the parish took the name of the school.

outright towards the erection of a church building men bought the pews. These they thereafter held in fee-simple. Rectors, wardens, and vestrymen had no control over them, and could not add subsequent conditions of ownership. Not till the grotesqueness of dedicating a church to God and still retaining a portion of it as a private possession that could be bought and sold burst upon them did the pew-owners voluntarily begin to make concessions and ultimately surrender the pews absolutely to the parochial authorities.

It seems to have been almost unthought of that there was no necessary relationship between the seat a parishioner occupied in the church and the amount he contributed to the parish treasury. If he did not buy a pew he had to rent one. Free churches were so uncommon, especially in the cities, that the building of Trinity Church, Mobile, as a free church was heralded far and wide. Only pew-holders and subscribers of an amount equal to the rental of the cheapest pew were permitted to vote at parish meetings. It was not the parishioners that voted, but the pews. One vote went with an entire pew. Those persons that economized by renting a pew conjointly had each the corresponding fraction of a vote. The highest bidder had the choice of pews, and the poor sat immediately under the three-decker pulpit or far back beneath the gallery or behind obstructing columns. The first parish to break away from this system of owned or rented pews was Christ Church, Tuscaloosa. Bishop Cobbs, who was rector of the parish, looked upon rented pews as "a hedge of thorns and briars"



to keep the poor out of the church, and under his advice and urgent entreaty the vestry, in 1849, declared that the pews should ever after be free. Trinity and St. John's, Mobile, soon followed this good example, but the old system long continued good enough for the majority of parishes.

Song services and the like on Sunday nights had already crept in and to some extent displaced the worship of God and the preaching of Christ. These services were not infrequently arranged by committees from the vestry in consultation with the choir-leader; the rector was not supposed to be interested. Much has been said of the lack of musical culture in those days; but the following action of the Tuscaloosa vestry, on November 12, 1831, would justify the inference that the members of at least one vestry were thorough vocalists:

*"Resolved*, That in accordance with the custom of the Pro. Epis. Church in the U. S. the vestry of Christ Church, Tuscaloosa, will celebrate an Oratorio of Sacred Musick, in this church, at some convenient time to be specified by the Committee of Arrangements to be appointed for that purpose."

While many of these details reveal to us a Church striving, not always wisely, to fulfil its mission, others declare that in some respects the Church in Alabama was forty and fifty years ahead of the old-established dioceses of the North and East. The two most notable instances of this diocesan precocity were: The Brotherhood of the Church, and the Bishop's Cathedral

project ; of both which remarkably little is known by Churchmen of to-day.

Leaving consideration of the Cathedral project for the ensuing chapter, we may now speak more particularly of the Brotherhood of the Church, which antedated the Brotherhood of St. Andrew by more than a generation. This society was an inter-parochial organization of the laymen of Mobile. Unsuccessful attempts had been made to establish it in the summer of 1853 and the summer of 1854, when yellow fever was epidemic. Finally the organization was effected, on May 3, 1855, by four laymen, who determined not to wait for others. The objects of this Brotherhood were far more comprehensive than those of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, and were five-fold, viz.: 1st, To promote Christian love and fellowship among its members by frequent intercourse, and mutual aid and encouragement in good work; 2nd, To relieve and provide for its members when sick or otherwise disabled; 3rd, To secure Christian burial to the bodies of its deceased members and other Churchmen, and to succor their widows and orphans; 4th, To assist the clergy, according to its ability, in relieving the sick and destitute, especially those of our own communion; 5th, As soon as able, to establish a reading room and library for the use of its members; and to adopt such other measures, from time to time, as may be deemed expedient, and in accordance with the original design.\* All five of these objects were realized within the first two years of the Brotherhood's

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\* Article II. of Constitution.

existence. Within three months about a score of members had been enrolled, in anticipation of another yellow fever epidemic. But this year Mobile was exempt from the scourge. Norfolk and Portsmouth, Virginia, however, suffered from the most malignant type of fever that ever appeared on this side of the Atlantic; and the Brotherhood, carrying out the spirit of their organization, gave noble succor to the afflicted cities. Two of the members volunteered to go to the relief of the helpless sufferers, hundreds of whom were dying from sheer neglect; these two and twelve others had in a few moments subscribed enough to pay all expenses of the intended help, and the Brothers were on their journey within twenty-four hours. They had abundant opportunity to perform the first four of the Brotherhood's obligations. In Norfolk alone, out of ten thousand persons remaining after the first exodus, two thousand died in two months—the proportion of deaths among the whites being one out of every three of the white population. Work of every kind was suspended, save the work of physicians, nurses, and grave diggers; and even the daily baked bread and the ominous cargoes of coffins were brought from Baltimore and Richmond. The general intellect and energy seemed alike paralyzed. Throughout the epidemic the two Brotherhood men did valiant service, returning to Mobile only when the plague had disappeared with the advent of cold weather. Subsequently, in addition to its altruistic beneficence, the Brotherhood combined in itself the two functions of a Church Congress and a Bible Society. Many

subjects of ethics, Churchmanship, and ritual received the freest discussion. A sales depot for Bibles, prayer books, and wholesome Christian literature in general, was successfully operated.

The Brotherhood of the Church was one of the first lay-organizations for personal service in the American Church. It was the outcome of a spirit that was felt by many individual laymen, and that was manifested by them both before and after the attempted organization. Perhaps the most notable example of zeal among the laity of this period was the work of Judge E. W. Peck, who, in making the rounds of the circuit over which he presided, always carried an abundant supply of Christian and ecclesiastical literature in the back of his buggy, and was quick to drop a tract where he thought it would do good.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### LAST DAYS OF BISHOP COBBS.

EARLY in 1856 it became apparent that the Bishop was breaking. His health had long been precarious. He had not spared himself, and his labors were now telling on his frame, which, never strong even in early life, was now at the age of sixty especially susceptible to disorders. It was imperative that he temporarily lay aside all work.

The Convention itself took the matter in hand. Through a resolution introduced by its Committee on the State of the Church it insisted that the Bishop should "take in the present such respite as his medical advisers may recommend to him, and exercise in the future administration of the diocese a just regard to the preservation of his health;" and through the liberality of its lay delegates\* it presented him with a sum of money "largely in excess of one thousand dollars," with which to travel and recruit his broken-down and wasted constitution.

Availing himself of this opportunity the Bishop spent the months of June, July and August in a journey to England, returning with what he termed "a more than ordinary degree of strength and of health." The phraseology is modest, but his condition warranted no stronger words. He was enabled, indeed,

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\* Especially of Messrs. R. S. Bunker and H. A. Schroeder, liberal communicants of Christ Church, Mobile

by his indefatigable zeal, to perform a vast amount of work, in office, study, and diocese, for two years more; but it became evident that he was nearing the end of pastoral toil and care.

As he drew near the close of his earthly labors the Bishop's horizon broadened and he meditated large projects. During his absence in England the founding of a University for Southern men, and especially Southern Churchmen, had been broached by Bishop Polk of Tennessee, and when he returned he fell in with it most eagerly, and gave to its furtherance the full weight of both his personal and his official influence. He and Mr. Lay were present at Lookout Mountain, on July 4, 1857, when the work was formally inaugurated by the episcopal, clerical, and lay representatives of seven dioceses. At the meeting held in Montgomery, on the twenty-fifth of the following November, to determine the location of the proposed University, he objected to both Sewanee and Atlanta, the leading competitors, and favored the neighborhood of Huntsville. Then came the sharp, severe, but short-lived financial crisis of 1857, during which all progress in the work ceased. As soon, however, as the squall was over interest revived. Alabama attempted to secure a reconsideration of the vote by which the University was to be established at Sewanee, but after a frank conference with the other trustees it humbled its diocesan pride before other and more important considerations. Bishop Cobbs told the Convention of 1859 that he expected the Churchmen of Alabama to subscribe a quarter of a million



dollars towards the University of the South. The rapid march of events prevented the subscription of more than a small fraction of this sum. For the next six years Southern men that had money had small interest in launching new educational enterprises; and afterwards they that were interested were about penniless. The Bishop never lost interest, however, and probably the last public function in which he participated was the laying of the corner-stone of the principal building of the University, in the second week of October, 1860.

Bishop Cobbs' other great vision was that of a Cathedral church and organization located in Montgomery, and to be known as "All Souls'." Although he never publicly alluded to this idea, it is almost certain that it was one of the fruits of his visit to England in 1856.

The Bishop was not afraid of cathedrals, although the Church of England had them; and he was not afraid to project the establishment of a cathedral, although the American Church furnished no precedent. It is true that, a few years before, Bishop Kip of California had placed his Episcopal chair in Grace Church, San Francisco, and called that church his Cathedral; but this he did by virtue of his rectorship of the parish which he exercised in conjunction with the oversight of the jurisdiction, and when his incumbency ceased his chair was removed and Grace Cathedral was again only Grace Church.\* But the Cathedral

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\* Hon. James M. Woolworth, LL. D., in *The Church Cyclopedia*, art. CATHEDRAL.

that Bishop Cobbs planned was of entirely different order. It is only as a temporary makeshift that Bishops engage in active parochial work; when they confine themselves to their Episcopal duties they are in the anomalous position of being chief pastor, yet having no home—of being called upon to perform Episcopal duties, yet depending on the courtesy of a parish priest for a consecrated building wherein to perform them.

To remove this anomaly was the starting point of Bishop Cobbs' plan; but the vision became broader: The Cathedral must be a large building, seating fifteen hundred whites in the body of the church and one thousand negroes in the galleries. About the quadrangle in which the Cathedral should stand were to be nine separate buildings, whose purposes declare the scope of the projected work, viz.: (1) diocesan library and Bishop's office, (2) sexton's house, (3) dean's residence, (4) infirmary and house of mercy, (5) home for five deaconesses, (6) house for theological students, (7) house for high classical school, (8) house for six or eight deacons, (9) steward's house for boarding occupants of last three houses. The estimated cost of erection was \$175,000, and this the Bishop thought could be collected in ten years.

The cost of supporting the work after its inception was also thoroughly digested. The Dean was to have the offertory; the deacons were to do missionary work for a hundred miles out of Montgomery on every Sunday and live on the salaries paid by their several stations—spending the weekdays at home, reading

and studying, assisting in pastoral ministrations and fitting themselves for independent labor, and working one hour every day in the flower-, fruit-, vegetable-, and grape-gardens; the candidates for Orders were, as elsewhere, to support themselves, and were to have the privilege of teaching in extra-Cathedral schools in the city; the deaconesses were also to teach, and were to supplement their income by the gifts of the charity-box at Cathedral-door; the steward's support would come from payment of board by deacons, candidates, and grammar-school boys from a distance; the sexton's salary would be provided by special contributions; and the Bishop's was already paid by the diocese. The Bishop set his heart upon the Cathedral as the starting point of vast ecclesiastical development. He wrote, under date of January 18, 1859, that it would "enable a Bishop to be not simply Chairman of the Convention, but the *heart*, the *motive power*, and the *controlling agent*, of his Diocese, and thus let him be, what has never been in our Church in the United States, a *real Bishop in the Gospel sense of the word*."

\* \* Tell Mr. Lay that after Convention I shall begin to collect materials for this great work, and that if he is my successor he must carry out my plan in ten years' time. \* \* As David felt himself unworthy to build the Temple, but contented himself with collecting materials, I am restrained from beginning this work, not only by my age, but by a feeling similar to that of David."

The dream of a visionary it was; but the visions of one century are the realities of the next. It is not a

hazardous statement that the next century will not attain its majority before not merely Montgomery, but also Birmingham, shall have a Cathedral erected on Bishop Cobbs' plan—the centers of all the educational and missionary work of the respective dioceses.

But while thus planning for the future, in which he had so much confidence, the Bishop grew less and less cheerful as to the present. His sermons and Convention addresses began to be marked by the dark and desponding tone of overwrought zeal, which reveals more clearly the nearness of subjective collapse than the enormity of the objective evils assailed or deplored. The Church seemed to him to be conforming more and more to the world; and in his despair that such should be its rapid drift after so many years of his own unstinted labors and the labors of his faithful yoke-fellows, he cried out: "When a whole country is submerged by a wide-wasting inundation, it is too late to talk of dykes and levees: and all that a prudent man can then do is to flee to some eminence and, if possible, to save his own life." It was the cry of despondency that an ever lengthening line of Elijahs is uttering through the ages.

The gloom that oppressed the Bishop touched the deep heart of the Church. In words of sympathy and stout encouragement, and of trustfulness in the guiding Spirit, Henry C. Lay, as Chairman of the Committee on the State of the Church, expressed the feelings of the entire diocese. "During the last year," he said, "the Bishop has exceeded in labor the laborious years that have gone before. And never

have his efforts been more acceptable than now. We anticipate for him many years of increasing usefulness. In this his hour of depression and foreboding we are bold to assure him, in the name of his Diocese, of its warmest confidence and attachment. We feel amply warranted in saying for each and every member of this Convention that we are proud to have for our leader one whose heart we know and whose sympathy has never failed us. Let him be well assured that in his battle against the Devil and the World we will not fail to follow in his charge.—It remains to be considered that the evils which have been alluded to are by no means submitted to in silence. The sermons and the private conferences of the present Convention give assurance that the watchmen do not slumber, and that faithful warnings fail not to be given. In the present day there are many influences which are not for good; and while we do what we can to resist them, we may well be content to leave all in the hands of Him who in the days of His flesh watched from afar the ship rocked upon the waves, and came mysteriously to the relief of the rowers, when spent with labor and still far from shore."

These words, unmistakably the sentiments of the Convention, which emphasized their delivery by its profound silence, and followed as they were by many private interviews in which hearts were opened, moved the Bishop greatly, and gave him renewed courage for his work. The next year was a season of unrelenting toil and overflowing returns. The receipts for diocesan missions were larger than ever



before, the Diocesan Girls' School began to take on substantial form, nearly every congregation received stated ministrations, and the number of persons confirmed exceeded that of any preceding year.

Throughout the summer and early fall of 1860 the Bishop continued his visitations steadily. In the latter part of October, having completed this work in North Alabama, he returned to Montgomery, and thence, without stopping a single day, went over to Prattville and Autaugaville. At the latter of these villages, on October 21, he made the last visitation of his life. Thenceforward he remained at home calmly awaiting the end. All his immediate family were summoned to his bedside and all were present at the last, his sons and daughters and their husbands and wives. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was received by them all. The dying father, rising partly in his bed, blessed his children like a patriarch of old, exclaiming with weeping eyes and overflowing heart, "Behold, Lord, here am I, and those that thou hast given me!"

It was on the eleventh day of January, 1861, that he passed away. On that day Alabama seceded from the Union. Though a true Southern man and loyal to his State, Bishop Cobbs, in common with thousands of other men in the South, was heartily opposed to Secession. The growing probability and final certainty of national disruption and fratricidal warfare had been to him a great grief, and, although his last official act was to direct the clergy of the diocese to refrain from using the Prayer for the President of the



United States so soon as the state and diocese of Alabama were no longer within the limits of the United States, he prayed that he might not live to see this great calamity. His prayer was granted. The State Convention which was to determine the question of Secession was sitting in Montgomery less than two miles from the home of the dying prelate. The Bishop passed into Paradise at twenty minutes past noon. The Convention was at that moment preparing for the final vote. Within an hour after Bishop Cobbs' death Alabama had seceded.



PART THIRD.

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The Episcopate of Bishop Wilmer.



## CHAPTER I.

### A CONFEDERATE DIOCESE.

THE Diocesan Convention of May, 1861, met in Montgomery, and was largely attended. The War of the Secession was under weigh. The bombardment of Fort Sumter was only two weeks back in history. Actual fighting in the field had not yet begun. The entire South was filled with an enthusiasm that foregrasped ultimate and sweeping victory. No man dared sit at the feet of Cassandra. Under the benign influence of a new and thoroughly homogeneous nation the prosperity of both Church and State was assured. Moreover a Bishop was to be elected, and the future relationship of the diocese, a lone star in the ecclesiastical firmament, with other sovereign dioceses was to be determined. Both secular enthusiasm and ecclesiastical excitement combined to cause a full attendance of clergy and laity.

First and foremost of the matters to be settled was the formal secession of the Church in Alabama from the Church in the United States. It was argued that the State's secession rendered corresponding action by the diocesan Church imperative. Some delegates wished to go slow; and these made the point that the secession, since it involved a change in the Constitution, must go over to the next annual Convention. The contention was just; it was sustained by the President of the Convention, the Rev. F. R. Hanson;

but an appeal was taken and the Convention by a large majority overruled the Chair's decision. The same fate awaited the point of order that the secession, since it involved a change in the Canons, must lie over. The Convention did not intend, in an extraordinary crisis, to bind itself by rules that contemplated only normal conditions. It was overwhelmingly determined to withdraw, and withdraw immediately, from organic union with the National Church of a foreign nation. The declaration of secession was adopted, and the act of secession was completed by the Convention's order to the Secretary to strike from the Journal the names of delegates to the General Convention of the Church in the United States, and its election of six deputies to a General Council of the dioceses situated in the seceded States. This latter course had been suggested by Bishops Polk and Elliott, with a view to the organization of the dioceses into a national Church. The deputies elected were the Rev. Messrs. Banister, Mitchell, and Pierce, and Messrs. J. D. Phelan, A. W. Ellerbee, and F. S. Lyon.

The occasion was by many deemed most propitious for taking initiatory steps towards a division of the diocese. An elaborate scheme was formulated, and kept under consideration two whole years. The State was to be divided into three dioceses named after the cities of Mobile, Montgomery, and Huntsville. The division was not imperative, but permissive; when any prospective See should contain the requisite number of clergy and parishes it should be at liberty



to elect its own Bishop and organize its own household. After two years the hopes of the most sanguine were growing cold, the plan met with no favor from Bishop Wilmer, and finally died in a committee-room.

The preliminary work of the Convention having been attended to and the Episcopal salary having been set at twenty-five hundred dollars,\* the election of a Bishop was in order. According to Article VIII. of the Constitution, which required that the clergy should nominate by ballot and the laity ratify or reject in the same way, a majority of each order determining the action of that order, the clergy retired and proceeded to their election. It had been Bishop Cobbs' earnest desire that Henry C. Lay should succeed him. Mr. Lay had long before shown that he was good Episcopal timber. Only eighteen months before the present Convention the House of Bishops had elected him Missionary Bishop of Arkansas, and he had been consecrated during the session of the General Convention. Being Bishop, not of a Diocese, but of a Missionary jurisdiction, he could be translated.† His name was presented to the clergy, and was strongly urged. But unfortunately Mr. Lay had lived in Alabama, and his brother clergy knew his faults as well as (or shall we say better than?) his virtues. It was contended that he had assumed the air and authority of a Bishop before his elevation to

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\* This was increased to \$3,000 in 1863.

† He was translated to Easton, Maryland, in 1869, being first Bishop of that Diocese.

the Episcopate, and had often forgotten that, though of exceptional ability, he was not, therefore, excused from observance of the amenities of ministerial intercourse. At any rate, whether or not his previous manner had been offensive in reality, Mr. Lay was not popular among the clergy, and three times they rejected the name of one whom the laity would have received with acclamation.

After an interval the clergy returned and informed the laity that their choice was the Rev. William Pinkney, D. D., of Maryland.\* A recess was taken, and when the Convention re-assembled in the afternoon the laity rejected the clerical nomination. The clergy again retired to make a new nomination, but being unable to agree upon any person suggested that the Convention adjourn till night. When night came the clergy were still in dead-lock, and requested further adjournment till morning. When the morning came the clergy were yet unable to make nomination, some still pressing for Bishop Lay and more desiring to re-nominate Dr. Pinkney, but the majority feeling that such insistence would rouse violent opposition among the laity. When, therefore, the morning session was called to order a committee of conference between the clergy and the laity was suggested, and a resolution was introduced to postpone the election to a future day. After considerable skirmishing and parliamentary wrangling postponement was carried, and the Convention adjourned to meet in St. Paul's Church, Selma, on November 21.

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\* Dr. Pinkney became Coadjutor Bishop of Maryland in 1870.

In the intervening months informal conferences were held, views were exchanged, search was made, and friction reduced. When the Convention met at the appointed time and place it was able to finish its labors and adjourn in a single-day. A few still desired Bishop Lay; but it was not long before the unanimous choice of clergy and laity was declared to be the Rev. Richard Hooker Wilmer, D. D., of Virginia. The Committee to notify Dr. Wilmer of his election consisted of the Rev. Messrs. Hanson, Massey, and Tichenor, and Messrs. J. D. Phelan, H. L. Alison, and H. A. Tayloe. The Standing Committee were instructed to signify to the Senior Bishop of the Church in the Confederate States the desire of the Convention that the consecration of the Bishop-elect be held in Mobile.

Dr. Wilmer accepted the position offered him. His election was ratified by the Bishops and Standing Committees of the Confederate Dioceses, and order was taken for his consecration. It was attempted to have the consecration in Mobile, as had been requested, but the condition of the country was so unsettled that though the time was set and the consecrators were notified to be present, the day arrived without the necessary consent of a majority of the Bishops. Postponement was unavoidable; and at length, on March 6, 1862, the consecration was held in St. Paul's Church, Richmond, Va., Bishop Meade presiding and joining with Bishops Johns and Elliott in the Laying-on-of-Hands. This was Bishop Meade's last public act. He returned from the church to his death-bed.

## CHAPTER II.

### BISHOP WILMER'S EARLY LIFE.

THE second Bishop of Alabama was born at Alexandria, Va., on March 15, 1816. His father, the Rev. William H. Wilmer, D. D., was one of three brothers, all of whom were clergymen. His brother, Dr. George T. Wilmer, also entered the ministry, and his cousin, Joseph P. B. Wilmer, became Bishop of Louisiana.

Richard Hooker Wilmer graduated at Yale College in 1836, at the age of twenty. Three years later he completed his theological course at the Virginia Theological Seminary, and was, on Easter Day, 1839, made deacon by Bishop Moore. On the next Easter Day the same Bishop advanced him to the priesthood.

His ministerial life exemplified the real itinerancy of a Church whose theory is that under normal conditions only death shall dissolve the marriage of minister and parish. In no one of his charges did Mr. Wilmer remain longer than five years. The first few years of his ministry were spent in Goochland and Fluvanna counties, Va. His success from the first was apparent to men, and soon large parishes were asking him to become their rector. Offers were made to him by wealthy and influential parishes in many cities of the diocese, and by congregations in other dioceses. Once, and once only, was he bewitched by the glamour of "a wider field of usefulness." For a





**RICHARD HOOKER WILMER**  
SECOND BISHOP OF ALABAMA  
(FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN ABOUT 1895).





single year early in his ministry he was rector of St. James' Church, Wilmington, N. C., the largest parish in the diocese, and the experience of that single year sufficed for a life-time. The climate was insalubrious. The high pressure and the thronging anxieties of a city parish, allowing little room for mental and spiritual refreshment, were incompatible with his nature and his methods. He felt himself called to be a preacher of righteousness—if of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, so too (and not less) of the righteousness of those who were called of Christ. To do his appointed work thoroughly he must have time for study and meditation, and opportunity to grasp and elucidate root principles, without which all preaching, however earnest and attractive, is superficial in nature and ephemeral in effect. So, after this one year in Wilmington he went back to Virginia, and entered upon his work among the country parishes, whence no urban or metropolitan calls afterwards seduced him. Five years he ministered in Clarke county, three years in Loudoun and Fauquier, and from 1853 to 1858 in Bedford.

Everywhere his preaching was marvellous in effect, causing multitudes to turn from sin unto righteousness. The reason was patent: The grace of God was supplemented by the labors of man. The preacher placed himself en rapport with his hearers. Not like a certain archer of old did he shoot his arrow at a venture. Never did he rest content with the bald statement of abstract principles. His sermons were preached every one to cover the case of a person

whom he had in both physical and mental view. His first step in preparing a sermon was to sit down and write a letter of friendly and ministerial rebuke and encouragement to that person; from this letter, as from a chrysalis, evolved the sermon that found and pierced the links of sin's protecting armor.

It was a time that needed just such bold, direct, searching sermons. The men of Virginia, with all the great unspiritual virility of Esau, deemed it the unmanliest thing a man could do to profess and call himself a Christian, and rejoiced over the emancipation of a youth who began to relate profane jests. Mr. Wilmer's first charge embraced about fifty miles of country along the James River. It was settled by descendants of Church families, and yet it did not contain one male communicant. Indeed, not a single male communicant was to be found along the river from Lynchburg to Richmond, a distance of one hundred and fifty miles. It was one of the churches in this spiritually destitute region that the fox-hunting, hard-drinking planters built, under unthinking impulse, for the "amusement" of their wives. And it was in this same church, not long after, that every man save one of that drinking party kneeled at the chancel rail and confirmed the vows of his long-neglected baptism. Of such kind was the material Mr. Wilmer had to work upon, and such was the fruit of his toil.

It was the frequent practice of the Virginia clergy of that day to hold what were called "associations"—forerunners of our present day "missions." The

ministers would go forth by twos and preach at one point for a week or ten days. It was thus that in the early days of his ministry the second Bishop of Alabama was thrown in contact with the first. A strong attachment grew up between Mr. Cobbs and Mr. Wilmer, and to this fondness of the older for the younger did Bishop Wilmer attribute the fact that he was called to succeed his friend in every charge that Mr. Cobbs left—Bedford, Petersburg, Cincinnati, Alabama; though he accepted the calls only to Bedford and Alabama.

In the summer of 1858 Mr. Wilmer was closing the fifth year of his ministry in Bedford county. For eighteen years he had been doing missionary work that necessarily kept him much from home, and he was beginning to feel that the natural duties of husband and father required his settlement in charge of a single congregation. At this time, and almost simultaneously, several parishes invited him to their rectorship. While these invitations were under consideration he received from a friend with whom he had long been intimate—John Stewart, of Brook Hill,—a proposition that appealed to him more strongly than any other, and ultimately proved irresistible. Mr. Stewart was a resident of Henrico County, and lived a few miles out from Richmond. He was surrounded by many extremely poor people, who were living in practical atheism. He did not aspire to the role of Dives. He felt that God, having given him wealth, and therefore expecting an account of his stewardship, it behooved him to expend his money for the benefit

of the Lord's children. He proposed, then, that Mr. Wilmer come to that neighborhood and attempt to instil Christ's teaching into the hearts of the poor; he himself would take care of the temporal considerations. Mr. Wilmer consulted some of his friends. They unanimously condemned the proposition as visionary, and advised him to reject it without more ado; otherwise, they said in effect, he would be throwing away several of the best years of his life. It was right to make sacrifices for the sake of the Gospel; but to cast pearls before swine ——! But to the heart and the mind of the minister the call seemed, after four months of indecision, manifestly divine. He accepted it, and at the same time pledged himself to give the project a three years' trial.

When he reached his new field, a field of unknown discouragements and possibilities, he had to begin at the very foundation. Services were at first held in a school-room which was used as the common property of all religious denominations. Gradually the hearts of the people were gained. Very soon a church was built, nominally by the congregation at large, the poorest giving his mite, but practically by John Stewart and his brother Daniel. Then a rectory was completed. The congregations and communicants increased steadily until, at the end of three years, a crowded church and a full chancel-rail attested the permanence of the work. The voice of sectarianism had always been that the Church was not suited to the unlearned and uncultured. This experiment at Emmanuel Church disproved the charge. Its success

attracted wide-spread attention, and on all sides it was felt that God was with him who had wrought this work. Alabama's Bishop was dead, and the bereaved diocese called on the Bishop's old friend to take his place.

Dr. Wilmer's pledge of three years' service had been redeemed; the work was secure and could safely be entrusted to another; and he accepted the call to be Bishop of Alabama.

## CHAPTER III.

### WAR TIMES.

**I**MMEDIATELY after his consecration Bishop Wilmer came to Alabama and entered upon his Episcopal duties, working throughout Lent in Mobile, and making a number of inland visitations near Easter. Bishop Green of Mississippi had made the requisite confirmational visits in 1861, but much work had accumulated which neither a visiting Bishop nor a Standing Committee could perform. Within less than six weeks the new Bishop had visited nearly the whole of the southern portion of the diocese, and had confirmed in Mobile alone ninety persons.

Scarcely had Bishop Wilmer set foot on Alabama soil when he was called upon to decide some questions which tested his calibre and whose solution manifested the deep sagacity for which he has ever since been famous. Day by day it became increasingly probable that some of the cities of Alabama would in the not distant future be occupied by Federal troops. When these troops took possession of towns where there were congregations of the Protestant Episcopal Church they would find a body of Christians praying, in due course of the service, for the President of the Confederate States. In such cases it was certain that trouble would ensue. The clergy asked the Bishop what course they should pursue.

The Bishop's reply was clear and decided: The



Diocese of Alabama, an autonomous Church, had severed her connection with the Church in the United States, which was now a foreign Church; she had recognized the facts of geography as stated by a sovereign and independent power, and gladly acquiescing had for more than a year used the prayer for those in civil authority not in a foreign country, but in the "Confederate States"; the mere occupation of the soil by an invading force could not absolve Churchmen from their allegiance to the government of their deliberate choice; while armed soldiery might occasionally exercise power over them only the Confederate government exercised authority; and finally, to allow military force to overawe them into praying for a government which they did not acknowledge to be their rightly constituted government would be to be guilty of untruthfulness and dishonor.\*

Would the Bishop, then, advise the clergy to use the prayer for the President of the Confederate States in the very teeth of the Federal soldiery?

Not so. To do this would be to bring on scandalous scenes in the sanctuary, and to invite even physical violence in the house of God. The course to be pursued was: First, to inquire of the commanding officer whether he designed to interfere with public worship; and then, in case he replied that he would compel either the prayer for the President of the United States to be used or all reference to civil authority to be omitted, to close the church, throwing the odium and responsibility of suspending the public

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\* Bishop Wilmer's first Convention Address, 1862.

worship of God on those who sought to establish a state religion after their own imaginings. This was the course followed by nearly all the clergy. One minister, however, insisted on keeping his church open, and with precisely the result that Bishop Wilmer had foreseen. Disturbance was raised by a Federal officer, who presented the alternatives of immediate use of the Prayer for the President of the United States or immediate cessation of the service. The poor clergyman chose the former alternative, and, as he afterwards explained apologetically, "used the prayer under protest." The status before God of a prayer made under protest, the Bishop grimly said, he would leave for others to determine.

This enforced closing of the churches was not, however, immediate, and was never universal. For more than a year subsequently only the Tennessee Valley was even temporarily in Union hands, and parish work went on without undue incident. But as the war progressed and the situation became graver, women, children, and disabled men formed the entire congregation. With the payment of salaries at a standstill and a currency depreciated almost beyond belief, the clerical life became a life of extreme hardship and simple endurance. To have the entire income reduced to one-fourth its former sum in a twelve-month, and yet to remain steadfast and unmovable at the post of duty, was a severe trial, but the clergy to a man comprehended the situation and quit them like men. Their hardships were somewhat mitigated by the liberality with which some of

their parishioners furnished them food from their own larders. The only parishes that were left without a minister were those whose ministers went to the front to become army chaplains, and to endure greater hardness that they might the better care for the souls of the men of the South. A result of their work was soon visible in the increased number of young men confirmed when at home on furlough.

Throughout the war the number of confirmed persons was large, and in the Conventional year 1863-64 reached a total of three hundred and thirty-seven. It was felt that God does not absent Himself from battle-fields, and that His Church is not intended to do her work only in time of peace and quietude. Men's hearts were stirred, and Christ came in the press of the multitude. In the larger towns of Montgomery and Mobile city missionaries began their work—in the former among its English-speaking poor, in the latter among the French and Germans. In the Black Belt numerous chapels were erected by planters for their slaves. Stickney, Cushman, Jarratt, Christian and others ministered almost exclusively to the Negroes. Stickney alone ministered to the slaves on eight large plantations in Marengo and the canebrake, preaching, baptizing, communicating, organizing into classes and watchmen, imposing penance on evil-livers, and in many ways reverting to early ecclesiastical discipline in his vain attempt to impose upon these volatile people the indissolubility of morality and religion. Menáeos ministered to five congregations just north of Stickney's field, and on a single occasion baptized

twenty-seven Negro children. In 1864 the Bishop himself confirmed twenty-one Negro adults in Tuska-loosa, where the Rev. R. D. Nevius was interesting himself deeply in the Christianization of the slaves. That such work as this should have been conducted amidst the horrors of a war of which the Negro was the immediate occasion is remarkable. That it should have been persevered in despite the disastrous crisis evidently now near at hand is confirmation strong as Holy Writ of the sincerity and unselfishness of those who labored, and of those who permitted and encouraged the work.

As the war progressed a new sphere of beneficence opened to the Church. An unusual number of orphans were the fruit of the battle-field, and many of these orphans were left entirely destitute. To many the Church became a veritable nursing-mother. St. John's, Montgomery, was the first parish to undertake the systematic care of orphans. Its "Bishop Cobbs' Orphans' Home" was in active operation throughout the entire conflict, and when the Federal troops occupied the city the commanding officer, ascertaining that the Home was named after his old minister in Cincinnati, detailed a special guard and furnished the Home with a month's supply of provisions.

The Bishop having commended this parish's benevolence to the diocese as worthy of imitation, the Council of 1864 passed a series of resolutions calling on every parish to establish within its boundaries a similar institution. This was a rather more sweeping

expression of opinion than the Bishop either expected or desired; for while he believed that a single large institution was less desirable than several small ones he perceived, plainly enough, that it was not practicable, and not desirable, to establish a Church Home for Orphans in every parish. Therefore as the evolution of the scheme had been left to him, he settled upon Mobile and Tuskaloosa as the places where the orphans might most easily be collected. These places, in addition to Montgomery's existing Home, would suffice for the present.

The attempt at Mobile was ill-timed and unsuccessful. The expense in Confederate money would have been enormous. The city was momentarily threatened by the enemy. Men were in no mood to hear of the planting of another institution, so straitened were they to obtain the necessities of existence, so doubtful of the morrow. The Churchmen of the place, with whom the Bishop held preliminary consultation, emphatically discountenanced even a tentative canvass for subscriptions, and the Bishop reluctantly retired from the field.\*

More successful was the attempt at Tuskaloosa. Here the rector and the vestry were deeply interested, heartily seconded the Bishop's efforts, and gave more than eight thousand dollars. All the parishes in that section of the state were appealed to for help, and all responded most liberally—Marion giving over six thousand dollars, Faunsdale, Demopolis, and Selma, each five thousand dollars, and Greensboro thirteen

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\* Convention Address for 1865, p. 11.

thousand. In a short time fifty thousand dollars had been secured. With thirty thousand of this a building lot and garden were bought and a dwelling and school-house built. Ten thousand dollars was set aside for investment in real estate with a view to endowment, and the remainder was reserved for current expenses.

During the first few months of its existence only eight orphans were received into the Home, but in conjunction with the Home a parochial school of fifty pupils was conducted. The immediate charge of this work was committed to three deaconesses whom the Bishop set apart by prayer, but without imposition of hands, in Christ Church, Tuscaloosa, on December 20, 1864. The institution of the order of deaconesses proved that Bishop Wilmer's conception of the inherent powers of the Episcopate was not fettered by the shackles of canonical provision. This primitive order, with Phoebe of Cenchrea as its best known representative, had no place in the polity of the American Church. But men of a catholic grasp of mind could not wait for a slow-moving General Convention to give its imprimatur to an inalienable right and the supplying of an immediate necessity. In 1845 Dr. Muhlenberg had set apart one woman for the work of the diaconate in the parish of the Holy Communion, New York City. In 1855 Bishop Whittingham had instituted a similar order in St. Andrew's parish, Baltimore. Bishop Wilmer had only these staunch Churchmen as his predecessors; what they agreed upon was sufficient warrant for any ecclesiastical departure.



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE BISHOP AND GENERAL ORDERS.

THE War of the Secession closed with the overturning of the Confederate Government, and the subversion of the government of the seceded States, the abrogation of their Constitutions, and the annihilation of their entire civil polity. Alabama was a military province, her Governor was held under duress, and Federal soldiery administered justice.

Under these conditions a very serious ecclesiastical difficulty presented itself. The use of the Prayer Book prayer for those in civil authority in the Confederate States had of course been discontinued when the Confederacy fell. But no other civil authority had been substituted for that which had been destroyed. Not only so, but it was a widely favored suggestion that the temporary occupation of the State by soldiers should be permanent, and the State be reduced to the slavish condition of a military province. For such a condition, nay, for such a prospect, Bishop Wilmer felt that neither he nor his clergy nor his people could ask long continuance. They could most heartily pray God to give the military power "grace to execute justice and maintain truth," but they could not ask God to grant their commander-in-chief "health, prosperity, and long life." For the existing state of government, impersonated in the President, the Bishop frankly stated that he desired the

least length of days and the least measure of prosperity consistent with the permissive will of God.\*

Feeling thus, the Bishop, on June 20, 1865, issued the following Pastoral Letter to the clergy and laity of the diocese:

“The lapse of the Confederate Government does not necessarily involve the disorganization of the General Council of the Church within the limits of that Government. The nationality of a church is a matter purely conventional, and of human arrangement. It is assuredly possible for two church organizations to exist under one common civil government without violating the unity of the Church. There is an essential difference between the *unity* of branches of the Church and their *union* in one legislative body. For example, the Church in England is in perfect unity with the Church in the United States; but there is no legislative union between these Churches. Again, and this is a case more nearly in point, the Church in Scotland is in unity with the Church in England, and yet they exist as distinct organizations under a common civil government. Consequently, no charge of schism can justly lie against the Church in the Southern States in case she should see fit to perpetuate herself through a separate organization. She does not thereby necessarily depart from the unity of the Church in doctrine, discipline, or order. Therefore, it may or may not, as circumstances indicate, be advisable and expedient to dissolve the Gen-

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\* *The Recent Past*, pp. 144 and 145.

eral Council. This is a question for future ecclesiastical determination.

“As to the changes in the language of certain prayers, which are made necessary by late political events, I observe that the lapse of the Confederate Government requires, of necessity, the omission of the ‘Prayer for the President of the Confederate States and all in civil authority.’

“The immediate substitution of another form of prayer does not follow of the same necessity, as will appear from the following considerations:

“To pray for all in authority is, unquestionably, a duty, but a duty of religious, and not of political origin and obligation. The mode of discharging that duty must be determined by the proper ecclesiastical authority. Consequently, any attempt on the part of a civil or military power to dictate to the Church in this matter cannot but be regarded as unauthorized and intrusive. Certain tests of loyalty have been established by authority; and they who faithfully conform to these tests have fulfilled the requirements of the law, and have a right, in equity and under the Constitution of the country, to manage their ecclesiastical affairs according to their own discretion. The Church has due regard to established authority, and is not to be presumed regardless of her sacred obligations. She must be left free and untrammelled in her legitimate sphere of action. Any attempt to dictate to her can only serve to retard the action which, in pursuance of her obligations of God and to her own

traditions, she will unquestionably take at the proper time and in the proper manner.

“ Now the Church in this country has established a form of prayer ‘for the President and all in civil authority.’ The language of that prayer was selected with careful reference to the subject of the prayer— ‘*All in civil authority;*’ and she desires for that authority prosperity and long continuance. No one can reasonably be expected to desire a long continuance of *military rule*. Therefore, the prayer is altogether inappropriate and inapplicable to the present condition of things, when no civil authority exists in the exercise of its functions. Hence, as I remarked in the Circular [of May 30], ‘We may yield a true allegiance to, and sincerely pray for grace, wisdom, and understanding in behalf of, a government founded upon force, while at the same time we could not, in good conscience, ask for its continuance, prosperity,’ etc., etc.

“ When the Civil Authority shall be restored, it will be eminently proper for the Church to resume the use of that form of prayer which has been established by the highest ecclesiastical authorities, and which has for so many years constituted a part of her Liturgy.

“ You are aware that in times past I have expressed a strong desire ‘that the regular and ordinary forms of public worship should be so entirely Catholic in character as to be adapted to all the exigencies of time, place, and circumstance,’ and that I urged this matter upon the attention of our Diocesan Council in 1864, with a view to action at the approaching General

Council. I still entertain the preference which I then expressed, but it is not for me, in my individual capacity, to introduce into the Liturgy any other form of words than that which the Church, in her collective and legislative capacity, has already established.

“ My conclusion is, therefore, and my direction which I hereby give, that when civil authority shall be restored in the State of Alabama, the Clergy shall use the form entitled ‘ A Prayer for the President of the United States and all in Civil Authority,’ as it stands in the Book of Common Prayer.”

To a man the clergy of the diocese fell into line, and for several months the services of the Church were peaceably conducted according to the Bishop's directions. But soon it became manifest that the military government purposed to review the Bishop's action. The headquarters of the Department of Alabama being at Mobile, and the Church's greatest strength being there, Mobile would evidently be the storm center in the event of a clash between ecclesiastical authority and military. Accordingly the Bishop, who had refugeed in Greensboro, went immediately to Mobile to be on the scene of action. He had scarcely arrived in the city when General Woods sent an officer of his staff to know when the Bishop meant to use the prayer for the President of the United States. The Bishop replied that as the question was put in a tone of authority he declined to answer it. The officer then proposed to talk over the matter “ as between man and man.” The Bishop acceded to this proposition, and the officer asked, “ When do you think you

will use the Prayer Book prayer for the President?" "When you all get away from here," was the reply of the Bishop; and he then asked the officer if with conditions reversed and the Confederate heel on the neck of the Union he could sincerely ask for life, health, and prosperity, to the Confederate General? The officer very excitedly exclaimed that he would be—something very dreadful—if he would. "Well," returned the Bishop, "I am not disposed to use your phraseology; *but*, if I do that thing that you come to order me to do,—address the Almighty with my lips, when my heart is not in my prayer,—I run great danger of meeting the doom that you have hypothetically invoked upon your own head."

The officer then returned to General Woods. A few days later—September 20, 1865, exactly three months after the appearance of the Bishop's Pastoral—the following remarkable document was promulgated from military headquarters at Mobile, as "General Orders, No. 38." It is so unique in its bold attempt to overturn constitutional religious freedom and to prescribe forms of public worship, that it deserves to be recorded in full:\*

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\* The author is indebted to Mr. Richard Hines, of Mobile, for the following exact transcript of the Order, as it appeared in *The Daily Register* the following morning, September 21.



“HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT  
“OF ALABAMA,  
“MOBILE, ALA., Sept. 20, 1865. }

“GENERAL ORDERS, No. 38.

“The Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States has established a form of prayer to be used for ‘the President of the United States and all in Civil Authority.’ During the continuance of the late wicked and groundless rebellion the prayer was changed to one for the President of the Confederate States, and, so altered, was used in the Protestant Episcopal Churches of the Diocese of Alabama.

“Since the ‘lapse’ of the Confederate Government and the restoration of the authority of the United States over the late rebellious States the prayer for the President has been altogether omitted in the Episcopal Churches of Alabama.

“This omission was recommended by the Right Rev. Richard Wilmer, Bishop of Alabama, in a letter to the clergy and laity, dated June 20, 1865. The only reason given by Bishop Wilmer for the omission of the prayer, which, to use his own language, ‘was established by the highest ecclesiastical authorities, and has for many years constituted a part of the Liturgy of the Church,’ is stated by him in the following words:

“ ‘Now, the Church in this country has established a form of prayer for the President and all in civil authority. The language of the prayer was selected with careful reference to the subject of the prayer—*‘All in Civil Authority’*; and she desires for that

authority prosperity and long continuance. No one can reasonably be expected to desire a long continuance of *military rule*. Therefore, the prayer is altogether inappropriate and inapplicable to the present condition of things, when no civil authority exists in the exercise of its functions. Hence, as I remarked in the Circular, 'we may yield a true allegiance to, and sincerely pray for grace, wisdom, and understanding in behalf of, a government founded upon force, while at the same time we could not in good conscience ask for its continuance, prosperity,' etc., etc.

"It will be observed from this extract—*1st*, That the Bishop, because he cannot pray for the continuance of 'military rule,' therefore declines to pray for those in authority. *2nd*, He declares the prayer inappropriate and inapplicable, because no civil authority [exists] in the exercise of its functions.

"On the 20th of June, the date of his letter, there was a President of the United States, a Cabinet, Judges of the Supreme Courts, and thousands of other civil officers of the United States, all in the exercise of their functions. It was for them specially that this form of prayer was established, yet the Bishop cannot among all these find any subject worthy of his prayers. Since the publication of this letter, a Civil Governor has been appointed for the State of Alabama, and in every county Judges and Sheriffs have been appointed, and all these are, and for weeks have been, in the exercise of their functions; yet the prayer has not been restored.

“The prayer which the Bishop advised to be omitted is not a prayer for the continuance of military rule, or the continuance of any particular form of government, or any particular person in power. It is simply a prayer for the temporal and spiritual weal of the persons in whose benefit it is offered. It is a prayer to the High and Mighty Ruler of the Universe that He would with his power behold and bless the President of the United States and all others in authority—that he would replenish them with the grace of His Holy Spirit that they may always incline to His will and walk in His ways; that He would endow them plenteously with heavenly gifts, grant them in health and prosperity long to live, and finally after this life to attain everlasting joy and felicity. It is a prayer at once applicable and appropriate, and which any heart, not filled with hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, could conscientiously offer.

“The advice of the Bishop to omit this prayer, and its omission by the clergy, is not only a violation of the canons of the Church, but shows a factious and disloyal spirit, and is a marked insult to every loyal citizen within the Department. Such men are unsafe public teachers, and not to be trusted in places of power and influence over public opinion.

“It is therefore ordered, pursuant to the directions of Major General Thomas, commanding the military division of Tennessee, that said Richard Wilmer, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Alabama, and the Protestant Episcopal clergy of said diocese be, and they are hereby for-

bidden, to preach or perform divine service, and that their places of worship be closed, until such time as said Bishop and clergy show a sincere return to their allegiance to the Government of the United States, and give evidence of a loyal and patriotic spirit by offering to resume the use of the prayer for the President of the United States and all in civil authority, and by taking the amnesty oath prescribed by the President.

“ This prohibition shall continue in each individual case until special application is made through the military channels to these headquarters for permission to preach and perform divine service, and until such application is approved at these or superior headquarters.

“ District commanders are required to see that this order is carried into effect.

“ By order of Major General Chas. R. Woods.

“ FRED. H. WILSON, A. A. G.”

Immediately upon the publication of these orders, which are sufficient in themselves to prove that the civil power had not been restored, save in empty form, Bishop Wilmer inquired of General Woods whether it was his intention to use military force in case the clergy of the diocese should disregard their suspension by the secular arm. This the Bishop did in order to bring out unmistakably the intent of the orders and to make it clear that he and his clergy would yield not to usurped authority but to force. It did not appear seemly that an issue of force should be made at

the very Altar of God, and the Bishop insisted in his note of inquiry that the declaration of intention to use military force would be regarded by him as equivalent to a forcible ejection from the precincts of the Sanctuary.

General Woods' reply was curt: He would if necessary use military force in closing the churches, should his order be disobeyed. Accordingly the Bishop advised that until the order was revoked or military force was withdrawn no attempt to worship in public should be made. At the same time he reminded the Churchmen of Alabama that communication with God's mercy-seat could not be obstructed by any created power. Individual prayer could be made. Two or three could be profitably gathered together in Christ's name. Where soldiers were stationed the churches were closed. Where no soldiers were stationed the churches were opened and the usual services maintained. Under the most stringent restrictions private houses made favorable chapels, and personal freedom allowed the Bishop to confirm and to issue pastorals; much to the indignation of the general who had suspended him from the exercise of his functions, and who threatened imprisonment and possible death, but dared not place him under arrest for an offence of which no law of the country took cognizance.

Meanwhile the Bishop was not content with this condition of affairs, which hampered the Church so greatly. His first attempt was to secure from the General Convention of the Church in the United States, of which, on its own theory, the diocese of

Alabama was a component part, a solemn protest against secular interference with ecclesiastical procedure. He hoped that the importance of the principle involved might unite in public expression those who differed as to his application of the principle. But the hope was vain. Political feeling was too high for the members of the Convention then sitting in Philadelphia to view the Bishop's action with unprejudiced eye, and the only step taken was by the House of Bishops, which ineffectually sent a single Bishop to Washington to procure if possible a revocation of the military interdict.

The Bishop's next step was to appeal to the Provisional Governor of the State—Lewis E. Parsons. General Orders No. 38 had stated that there was a civil Governor, and the Bishop determined to test him for authority. In October he called on the Governor to show the truth of his assertion that the military authority was subservient and subordinate to the civil authority. The Governor was unable to substantiate his claim, but in a very courteous note he promised to lay the whole affair before President Andrew Johnson. This note was shortly followed by another stating that the President declined to consider the matter.

On November 27 the Bishop himself made direct appeal to the President, calling it to his attention that the Constitution, the supreme law, prohibits Congress from interfering with religious worship and that Congress cannot allow her military arm to do what the Constitution expressly forbids to her civil arm; representing that he found himself, not having been



accused as a lawbreaker, subjected to the operation of pains and penalties, and assailed with ignominious epithets; affirming that even if he were guilty of violating the law of his own Church (though he was not, for he was not a member of the ecclesiastical organization mentioned in General Orders) the secular power was not competent to construe and enforce her rubrics and canons; and demanding in equity and constitutional law that the unauthoritative General Orders No. 38 be rescinded. After hanging fire some time the appeal was successful. Much against his will, and with much bitterness of soul and pen, General Woods' superior, Thomas, withdrew the offensive General Orders, at the same time using his official position as a cloak for the deepest maliciousness. In tone the last Order was even more violent, in its conscious impotence, than the first :

“ HEADQUARTERS  
“ MILITARY DIVISION OF THE TENNESSEE, }  
“ NASHVILLE, TENN., Dec. 22, 1865. }

“ GENERAL ORDERS, No. 40.

“ Armed resistance to the authority of the United States having been put down, the President, on the 29th of May last, issued his Proclamation of Amnesty, declaring that armed resistance having ceased in all quarters, he invited those lately in rebellion to reconstruct and restore civil authority, thus proclaiming the magnanimity of our Government towards all, no matter how criminal or how deserving of punishment.

“ Alarmed at this imminent and impending peril to

the cause in which he had embarked with all his heart and mind, and desiring to check, if possible, the spread of popular approbation and grateful appreciation of the magnanimous policy of the President in his efforts to bring the people of the United States back to their former friendly and national relations one with another, an individual, styling himself Bishop of Alabama, forgetting his mission to preach peace on earth and good will towards man, and being animated with the same spirit which through temptation beguiled the mother of men to the commission of the first sin—thereby entailing eternal toil and trouble on earth—issued, from behind the shield of his office, his manifesto of the 20th of June last to the clergy of the Episcopal Church of Alabama, directing them to omit the usual and customary prayer for the President of the United States and all others in authority, until the troops of the United States had been removed from the limits of Alabama; cunningly justifying this treasonable course, by plausibly presenting to the minds of the people that, civil authority not yet having been restored in Alabama, there was no occasion for the use of said prayer, as such prayer was intended for the civil authority alone, and as the military was the only authority in Alabama it was manifestly improper to pray for the continuance of military rule.

“This man, in his position of a teacher of religion, charity; and good fellowship with his brothers, whose paramount duty as such should have been characterized by frankness and freedom from all cunning, thus took advantage of the sanctity of his position to mis-

lead the minds of those who naturally regarded him as a teacher in whom they could trust, and attempted to lead them back into the labyrinths of treason.

“For this covert and cunning act he was deprived of the privileges of citizenship, in so far as the right to officiate as a minister of the Gospel, because it was evident he could not be trusted to officiate and confine his teachings to matters of religion alone—in fact, that religious matters were but a secondary consideration in his mind, he having taken an early opportunity to subvert the Church to the justification and dissemination of his treasonable sentiments.

“As it is, however, manifest that so far from entertaining the same political views as Bishop Wilmer the people of Alabama are honestly endeavoring to restore the civil authority in that state, in conformity with the requirements of the Constitution of the United States, and to repudiate their acts of hostility during the past four years, and have accepted with a loyal and becoming spirit the magnanimous terms offered them by the President; therefore, the restrictions heretofore imposed upon the Episcopal clergy of Alabama are removed, and Bishop Wilmer is left to that remorse of conscience consequent to the exposure and failure of the diabolical schemes of designing and corrupt minds.

“By command of Major-General Thomas,

“WM. D. WHIPPLE,  
“Assistant Adjutant-General.”

This order was promulgated from Mobile, by Gen-

eral Woods, on January 10, 1866, and on January 13, civil authority then having been restored, Bishop Wilmer issued a final pastoral, calling on the clergy and laity to use the prayer for the President of the United States.

This pastoral was not a retreat from his former position. Neither was it a compromise. The Bishop's position was never changed. On occasion of the closing of the churches he had written: "Should the General Council, of which the Diocese of Alabama is a component part, order any prayer in place of that which has ceased of necessity, then, from that time forth, the ordering of the Council would be decisive as the supreme law of the churches constituting said Council." The General Council had provided for such a prayer while the Alabama churches were closed, and its provision was to have force of law in any diocese when approved by its Bishop or its Diocesan Council. On account of military dictation the Bishop withheld his approval, and gave it only when secular pressure was withdrawn.

The result of secular interference was to delay the use in Alabama of the Prayer for the President of the United States just two months. What the Church refused to do of compulsion she did of her own free will. Some whose loyalty to the Union blinded them to the presence of a matter of principle, profound and far-reaching, criticized Bishop Wilmer severely for his course. But thirty years later, when time gave sufficient perspective, and the blindness of prejudice had largely disappeared, no one disputed the con-

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clusion of the Historiographer of the American Church, the Rt. Rev. William Stevens Perry, Bishop of Iowa: "This action of the Bishop established for all time to come, in this land at least, the principle that in spiritualities the Church's rule is supreme."

## CHAPTER V.

### THE BISHOP AND THE GENERAL CONVENTION.

THE Church in the United States was not consulted either in Bishop Wilmer's election or in his consecration. And for this reason: The seceded states formed another nation, and in that nation was erected a national Church, declaring that it held, as regarded intercommunion and legislative independence, the same relationship to the Church in the United States that that Church held to the Church of England. It had its own presiding Bishop, Meade of Virginia, and its own supreme legislative body, the General Council. Its constitution and canons were but slightly altered from those in force in the United States. A majority of the Bishops and a majority of the Standing Committees must consent to the election of a Bishop before his consecration could occur. In Bishop Wilmer's case, the only one that arose within the period of secession, this consent was given and the Bishop was duly consecrated.

When this action became known in the United States it created much indignation and a considerable amount of intemperate writing. The patent fact was ignored that, though supporting itself against outside aggressions by force of arms, an autonomous, regularly constituted, civil government existed, known as the Confederate States, and that the ancient custom of legislative independence for branches of the Church



in separate countries was but followed by the Church in the Confederate States. In diocesan journals, pastoral letters, and resolutions found in the Journal of the General Convention, the words "rebels," "traitors," "schismatics," and the like, were not infrequently used by the Church's adopted but unassimilated sons. In the General Convention of 1862 it was proposed that Bishop Wilmer's jurisdiction be proclaimed null and void; but the resolution was not adopted.

With the lapse of the Confederacy it became necessary for the Southern dioceses to determine upon a course of procedure. Very pronounced differences of opinion arose. Some claimed that the absorption of the Confederacy into the Union carried with it, and without formal action, the dissolution of the General Council and the attachment of the Southern diocese to the General Convention. It was urged by these that the Bishops and deputies from the various dioceses should take their seats in the General Convention of 1865 as if nothing had occurred since the harmonious Convention which had met in Richmond in 1859; that nothing unpleasant would occur; and that the Convention had no other wish or expectation, as witness the fact that even in 1862 the roll-call was never curtailed, but always began, in a vote by orders, with Alabama, and contained in alphabetical order the name of every seceded state. Among the most pronounced advocates of this view were Bishops Atkinson of North Carolina and Lay of Arkansas, who pro-

ceeded to Philadelphia and took their seats in the House of Bishops.

But the majority of Southern Bishops and dioceses, led by Bishops Elliott, Green, and Wilmer, contended that this view was entirely Erastian and un-Catholic; that no organization of associated dioceses that bases itself on geographical and national boundaries can urge any higher claim than mutual agreement, or consideration of high expediency; and that, in the present instance, expediency was a matter to be demonstrated. One party in the Church of the General Convention proposed "to keep the Southern Churchmen for a while in the cold," and "to put the rebels upon stools of repentance." Not knowing the strength of this party, but well aware that, generally, fanaticism grows fast in the hour of triumph, having no data on which to estimate the concessions and admissions that would possibly be required but having no concessions and no admissions to make, most of the Bishops and their dioceses determined to maintain the organization of the General Council until the temper of the General Convention should make clear their future course.

Many were brought to such decision by the publication about this time of some correspondence between John Henry Hopkins, Presiding Bishop and Bishop of Vermont, and Bishop Wilmer. Bishop Hopkins had issued a circular letter to the Southern Bishops, pleading with them not to prolong their separate legislative organization, which, being wilful and needless, was schismatical; he had pointed out that in any case it was but "a matter of time" when such separation

must disappear, and urged that what must be done, at any rate, sooner or later, were better done at once.

Bishop Wilmer's response was couched in terms of stern manliness. He asserted that in some cases the time of action is everything. "There is nothing illegal," he said, "in a second marriage, and it is generally a 'mere question of time' with men when they shall marry again; but

'The funeral baked-meats

Do coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.'"

It was unnatural to suppose that Southern grief could entirely and immediately turn from the past and sing *Te Deums* with the victorious peoples. It must have time. Moreover there was this insuperable objection: Every single man that represented the Southern dioceses in the General Convention, having obtained such judicial or military rank or such an amount of property as excluded him from the general amnesty, was still, according to the President's proclamation, "an unpardoned rebel and traitor;" and it was almost certain that the men who called these prospective deputies rebels and traitors would have the courage of their convictions, and, on the floor of the House of Deputies, question the propriety of allowing rebels and traitors to participate in the deliberations of a loyal Church.

Influenced by these and similar considerations, the Southern Bishops and dioceses held aloof from the General Convention. Bishops Atkinson and Lay alone resumed their former places in the House of Bishops; but they did not take their seats uncondi-

tionally. They made the recognition of Bishop Wilmer as Diocesan of Alabama a condition precedent. This the entire College of Confederate Bishops had determined upon as their own course, however favorable the General Convention should be in other respects. They came to this determination despite Bishop Wilmer's express statement that rather than allow his case to constitute a barrier to general pacification he would resign.

After hearing the representations of the two Southern Bishops the House of Bishops assented to the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Alabama upon two conditions: *1st*, That he should furnish evidence of his consecration; and, *2nd*, That he should make declaration of conformity to the Constitution and Canons of the Church in the United States. These conditions were reasonable, and as they were precisely the terms on which any foreign Bishop would be admitted to legislative authority in the Church in the United States, the most ardent Diocesan-Rights man could not take exception to them.

It was more than two months before this action was officially communicated to the Bishop of Alabama. Meanwhile the General Council of the Southern dioceses had met in Augusta, Georgia, in November. The spirit of charity which had prevailed in the General Convention the preceding month commended itself to the heart of all present. Again did the genial warmth of the sun do what the cold Northern blasts could never have done, and the dissolution of the General Council was soon accomplished. Abso-

lute freedom of action and liberty to withdraw from the Conciliar compact was accorded every diocese. Only one obstacle prevented the prompt return of Alabama to legislative union with the general Church, and that was the military duress described in the last chapter. But this having ended, the Bishop convoked a special diocesan Council in Montgomery, on January 17, 1866, laid before it the whole matter, received its unstinted "approbation, admiration, and thanks for the firm, dignified, and Christian manner in which he had maintained the independence and dignity of the Church in this diocese;" and then, by formal resolution, the Church in Alabama resumed its former relation to the national Church.

Immediately after the adjournment of this special Council Bishop Wilmer set out for New York, and on January 31, 1866, in Trinity Chapel, of that city, made the prescribed Declaration of Conformity, and united with the Presiding Bishop and the other Bishops and clergy present in the celebration of the Holy Communion.

"Thus happily, as I think," said the Bishop to the diocesan Convention of 1866, "the Church in Alabama has been able, through God's grace and kind providence, to do her full duty, and to maintain her dignity and propriety; and looking alone to the weal of the whole body of Christ, to pursue a steady and consistent course. Henceforward, guided by the same Spirit which has thus far led us and governed all our deliberations, let us more than ever strive for

those things which concern the glory of God and the good of His Church.

“We are able to show to the world that we are not a sect, much less a sectional sect; that the catholic spirit of the Southern dioceses has met with a like response in the catholic spirit of the Northern dioceses—“deep calling unto deep”—giving us confidence that henceforth, as ever before, no political differences shall prevail to break the bonds of catholic unity and of Heaven-born charity.”



## CHAPTER VI.

### DECAY OF THE NEGRO WORK.

THROUGHOUT the civil war the relationship of master and slave had remained unchanged. The master realized that the obligations of ownership were not rendered less sacred by the inoperative proclamation of a foreign power. The slave was content to serve him to whom he had always confidently looked for food and raiment, for tobacco and snuff, and for that personal consideration which was lacking in few slave-holders and which seldom found an unresponsive object.

When the impatience of men brought about by revolution that abolition which God was bringing about by the slower but surer process of evolution, and when they whose natures were fit only for serfdom were by one violent effort hurled into an environment for which man had made no due preparation, this state of mutual confidence was changed, as by hideous enchantment, into a state of reciprocal distrust. With the ballot, the white badge of freedom, in their hand, the newly enfranchised felt that they were as gods. They easily fell a political prey to those swarming demagogues and carpet-baggers who unscrupulously exalted the Negro that they themselves might use him as a stepping-stone. With centuries of ignorance, and bondage, and slow development<sup>n</sup> behind them, and without any exercise in intelligent choice and self-

determination, they were unable to discriminate between freedom and anarchy. With minds excessively emotional, and without discipline by the informing Spirit of God as to the proper objects and limitations of emotion, they confounded the restraints of God with the restraints of man. "Six days shalt thou labor" was an obsolete command, now that no visible law enforced it; and since they were free to idle when they wished, the ex-slaves wandered from place to place as fancy dictated, filled with restless anxiety to demonstrate their freedom by exercising it to the utmost limit. They looked upon their former owners with a suspicion that fast grew into settled antagonism. Labor became thoroughly demoralized, and it seemed that the devastation of civil war would shortly be surpassed by the tidal-wave of race conflict. The wealth of the South was in land, and the value of the land depended on its yearly harvests. With fewer laborers came reduced acreage, poorer cultivation, smaller crops; and with this the further impoverishment of landowners. This was succeeded in constantly increasing ratio by the removal of the white people to the towns and the surrender of the country to the blacks.

This segregation of the races, attended with the numerical predominance of the blacks over those whites that remained on the old homesteads, caused among the whites increased, and often baseless, fear of Negro uprisings, and led to the formation, for common protection, of the Ku Klux Klan, whose purpose was to create and perpetuate such terrorism among the Negroes as to nip in the bud any incipient lawlessness,

and to kill out the insolent spirit and habits that were springing up so luxuriantly under the fructifying presence of Northern troops.

The political alliance of the Negroes with the aliens, and the apparently necessitated retaliation of the whites, tended to a further disseverance of interests that should have been common. In nine years the Legislature of Alabama, elected by Negroes and composed in large part of Negroes and carpet-baggers, had increased the State debt from less than six millions of dollars to more than thirty-eight millions. Evidently the whites must rule or be ruined. To rule they must as a phalanx set themselves in opposition, determined, aggressive, merciless, to the forces of disintegration. And this relationship must be maintained in every county, township, neighborhood, house, and heart, till the common salvation of whites and blacks alike was secured.

Such were the conditions that confronted the Church in Alabama after the war. Under the old regime it had been possible to give the slaves frequent religious ministrations, and many a slave-holder had gladly made provision for their spiritual and moral instruction. But now the ex-slaves would take neither their politics nor their religion from their former owners. Northern politicians and renegade Alabamians initiated them into the mysteries of political economy. Preachers of their own color made broad for them the strait and narrow way. Every attempt made by the clergy that had formerly visited them, preached to them, and administered to them the Sacraments, was

now met with that disingenuousness which has ever characterized the response of the freedman to the approaches of the white.

The few faithful Negroes that clung to the teachings and the communion of the Church in preference to hearing the ranting ululation of sensual enthusiasts were ostracized by their race, and suffered all the social trials that went with mediæval excommunication. They were regarded as heathen and traitors. In health they had no communication with their own people. In sickness they received no succor from their own kinsfolk. In death hirelings of their own race performed the offices that affection refused. Some endured to the end a martyrdom as real as that of the early Christians. But most wearied after a time, and went with their people.

The Church in Alabama yielded only to necessity in abandoning for a time her efforts to evangelize the Negro. There were lips to speak so long as there were ears to hear, and long after there were hearts to feel. It must be confessed that the laity did not evince any wild enthusiasm. To any reasonable distance they would follow the rector's lead, but they themselves would not lead. When, in 1866, it was proposed that the Convention should, in its corporate capacity, adopt some authoritative plan for the furtherance of Christian work among the Negroes, the laity flatly, though in parliamentary language, refused to have part or parcel in the matter as a diocesan movement. They said that they would "confide all details" to their spiritual pastors and governors, the

Bishop and the clergy, believing that under their wise counsel the guiding principles of the Bible and the ordinary forms and appointments of the Church sufficed to meet all the exigencies of the case.

The Bishop and the clergy did what they could do to stem the tide, but that was little. The General Convention attempted to assist the Southern Bishops, before they asked for assistance, by establishing the "Freedmen's Commission," but the Commission rendered assistance impossible by suggesting, at the outset, that the Church's work among the Negroes pass from the Bishops' jurisdiction and be entrusted to other agencies. This schism-breeding proposition was promptly and forcibly rejected by Bishop Wilmer, who, magnifying his office and purposing that it should not be belittled by others, took the ground that the Bishop of a diocese is charged with the selection of instrumentalities, and that these, if they are to work properly, must work under his supervision; that class legislation is repugnant to the mind of Christ, in whom is neither bond nor free; and that the Churchmen of Alabama were debtors to the free as to the bond—not less; but also not more. Finally, the Bishop said, he was willing to accept subordinate help, but not co-ordinate.\* Assistance on such terms was not forthcoming, and the diocese was left to its own devices.

As early as 1867 the many congregations of Negroes had dwindled to two—the Church of the Good Shepherd, Mobile, and Faunsdale Chapel, on the planta-

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\* Journal of 51st Annual Convention, page 36.

tion of the Rev. William A. Stickney, in Marengo county. Occasionally a solitary Negro communicant was found in white congregations, but the only aggressive work attempted, except in the two congregations mentioned above, was among the children. Even this did not long survive. In St. John's parish, Montgomery, Dr. H. M. Smead conducted a Sunday school of six white teachers and one hundred and twenty Negro pupils; but, in face of the parental and social influences that were moulding the pupils' character all through the week, the difficulties and discouragements were too many, and the fruits of an hour's influence and teaching once a week were too few and insignificant, to warrant a continuance of the attempt. When, in addition to these discouragements, intermeddling Negro politicians went about proclaiming that the school was simply a hot bed of horrible Democratic sedition, the project was doomed. After two years of faithful labor the entire corps of workers retired from the field.

In the "Canebrake" of Hale, Perry, Dallas, and Marengo counties, the Rev. William A. Stickney fought a losing fight, single-handed, for nearly twenty years. Mr. Stickney was a large land-owner; it was his property that gave the name to the present town of Faunsdale. On his plantation he had built, at a cost of twenty-five hundred dollars, a neat chapel for the use of those who, at first his slaves, were now his tenants. His return to the practice of the early Church in imposing penance on evil-doers appealed to the Negroes' sense of fitness, and did not diminish his



popularity among the congregations that he served, and they requested him to preach to them regularly on several plantations. For a short while their attendance was good, especially on week-days when field-labor was suspended and the wages of attendants at chapel ran on. Upon his own plantation, when the congregations began to decrease Mr. Stickney refused to renew the lease of his tenants except with the stipulation that they should regularly attend public services in the chapel. With the Negroes it was one thing to make this contract, and another to keep it. With those who kept the contract it was one thing to come and another to worship. Very soon the ministerial proprietor of the chapel ceased the attempt to make the Negroes worship the Almighty by contract.

But this failure did not quench his ardor. With the help of the women of his family he began a day-school for the children that were too young to work in the fields. Only a two-hours' session was held, and the instruction was entirely oral and sugar-coated. The idea on which the school was founded was that the work of forming Christian character must begin very near the cradle and persist through life. If it seemed hopeless to change those whose characters had crystallized, it was possible to develop unformed, plastic characters along right lines. At least, this was the Stickneys' hope. The two great obstacles to its realization, heredity and environment, were not sufficiently considered. Heredity gave an inborn predisposition to sensuality, a *phronema sarkos*, above that of mankind at large; for the sense of morality is

a growth that their ancestry had not cultivated, the ape and the tiger had not been worked out, and their inborn inclination found favorable atmosphere and soil in the home life. The vices of the Negroes were grosser than those of the whites; their will-power was weaker; their consciousness of sin could not, apparently, be germinated. Having little training of the spirit and less of the mind they were debarred from intellectual enjoyments and spiritual restraints. Development of mind and soul did not keep pace with development of body; hence they easily and almost inevitably fell victims to first temptations. At the present day many have reached a high plane of ethics, and in every class an imperfect and arbitrary morality is evident, but in those days the vast majority had no morality at all. They who from afar spun their theories and idealized their brother-in-black believed that Southern men and women were grossly calumniating their old slaves. But they who came down and worked in the midst of them, and went in and out among them, found that enchantment was inseparable from distance.

Mr. Stickney served the Negro, in face of all these obstacles, long, faithfully, and intelligently; but his zeal could neither blind him to facts nor prevent him from telling what he saw. In 1869 he wrote: "Viewed from the Christian standpoint, I can say nothing of this race, within my sphere of observation, to encourage you as to their future. They have not abandoned the spasmodic, emotional religion taught them by sectarian religionists. 'Professing' is yet

their favorite and perhaps only religion, with an utter disregard for the morality enjoined in the Decalogue. It is dismal to think of their licentious depravity who occupy the head and front ranks in this illusory system." A year later he said: "Results in this field have not cheered my heart with the hope of elevating the people in pure or Christian morality." A few years later he said: "Perseverance is the rule adhered to amid prospects anything but hopeful. Indications pointing to the growth of morality—especially of truth, integrity, and chastity—do not cheer my toils for and with this people." From year to year a few were confirmed, and the nominal communicants at Faunsdale chapel long numbered about twenty-five; but the most of these were not actual communicants, and not a few that purposed to communicate were repelled from the Holy Table.

In 1883 the final full report of this work showed its virtual disintegration: "I am at a loss to know what to do in this field of labor. For the past twenty years I have been *practically* familiar with various of the experiments recommended on paper in different quarters of the Church. My strength and deepest concern have been expended on them. With the beautiful ecclesiological structure on the plantation in days of slavery, I have had, and *used*, the opportunity of dealing with it as a regular parish—baptizing and instructing the children, celebrating the Holy Communion, visiting the sick as physician to both soul and body, solemnizing marriage, and burying the dead. In settling their quarrels, counselling them

through difficulties, and in all my dealings, the staple of my conversation has been their responsibility and allegiance to their Creator as taught by our Redeemer. I have found it easy to bring forward classes to Confirmation. The picture is attractive to them. Outwardness ever has a charm for them, and the more of it, the greater their avidity to participate in it. But emptiness, sham, hypocrisy, are about all I have seen come of it. I am paralyzed in any and every attempt to induce this race of people to realize that God requires *the keeping of His commandments* as a condition of pleasing Him. They will flock to the Holy Communion besotted in bestial depravity, unless I can find it out and repel them. It distresses me to invite them to a pure participation of that Holy Sacrifice. I have hence reported but one celebration the whole past year, and I cannot actually frame a list of communicants. This is not the report of a missionary toiling among the heathen on Afric's shores. But it is the exhibit of Americanized Africans, that have been instructed from childhood in the Catechism on this plantation. I have in my view successive crops of the young—children's children—who have thus been tried, and I fail to see one step gained for or by them in purity of life and common morality."\*

Similar discouragement and disintegration attended the efforts of the Rev. Dr. Massey in Mobile. The congregation of the chapel of the Good Shepherd gradually melted away and sought the companionship

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\* Journals of Conventions, Rev. Wm. A. Stickney's reports, *passim*.

of their own people. From fifty communicants the number dwindled to nine. The separate organization was dissolved, the building was sold for a few hundred dollars, and the handful of communicants became members of Trinity parish.

So among the children of Montgomery, the farmhands of the Canebrake, and the literate of Mobile, the Church's attempts failed utterly and completely, and in 1882 not one of the old organized Negro congregations was to be found in the Diocese of Alabama.

## CHAPTER VII.

### ETHIOPIA'S UPLIFTED HANDS.

IN utter ignorance of the unparalleled conditions that confronted the Church and the Churchmen of the unreconstructed South, many Northern journals gave liberal and aggressive advice to the Southern bishops and clergy. When their nostrums and panaceas were gently put aside, they quickly abandoned counsel and began to hurl epithets. Inertness and indifference to Negro evangelization were openly charged against the bishops. The Negro was supposed to be looking up hungrily to the shepherds, and the shepherds were withholding food; to be swarming about the Church doors eager to enter, and the bishops were waving off the multitudes.

The true condition was just the reverse. The Negro was waving off the bishop. Every proffer of spiritual food was daintily examined and rejected. Every attempt to benefit individuals contributed to a spirit of self-assertion that misconstrued every effort. And when the political influences playing upon them are remembered it is not surprising that they looked upon these approaches of their old masters as so many attempts to conciliate their most worthy reserve.

But, however natural the Negro's behavior, it necessitated cessation of effort on the part of his would-be benefactor. The fever must have time to



cool off, the reason to return. Experience must teach what affirmation could not teach.

Years passed. Social equality came not to the Black. Neither did he long retain his political superiority. The rightful owners of the State drove out of power the dishonest carpet-bagger and his unscrupulous black tools, and put a stop to the fearful knavery that was bankrupting the commonwealth. After a while the Negro learned that legislation could no longer give him his daily bread, and that henceforth he must earn in the sweat of his face what bread he did not steal. Then he turned to his old master. The former confidence between them was gone, but there was between them a bond that gave hope of better things in days to come. If the ex-slave would not follow from love, he would follow because of the loaves and fishes. He had learned where his best interests lay. From necessity he had learned humility. It was now possible to edify him without puffing him up.

The attempt at edification was not made immediately. The distrust of those who remembered the past was not removable at beck and nod. Time must be given for the forgetting of fierce conflicts, and for the trying of new things, whether they were of temporary or of permanent duration. If the Negro had so changed that the Gospel of Jesus Christ would not incite him to leap the barrier of race and social condition that God himself had erected, then Churchmen were willing for the clergy to carry the Gospel to the Negro once more.

Finally, at what was deemed an opportune time, a new beginning was made in Mobile. It was in 1882—the year that saw the death of the last Black Belt congregation. The remnant of the old congregation of the Good Shepherd formed the nucleus. The clergy and the Bishop bore the entire burden of the attempt. They did not receive the co-operation of the laity; they neither asked nor expected it; for the laymen of Mobile, those of them that were interested in ecclesiastical and benevolent work, were already doing what they could for the numerous hospitals and widows' and orphans' homes in the city.

The father of the revived mission work among the Negroes of Alabama was the Rev. J. S. Johnston, who had become rector of Trinity Church, Mobile, in 1880. In May, 1882, as chairman of a special committee to which was referred a portion of Bishop Wilmer's address dwelling upon the Church's responsibility to the Negro, Mr. Johnson vigorously and clearly outlined the necessary steps to be taken in leading the Negro to true and acceptable worship of God. Premising that worship necessitated intelligence, he insisted that no lasting work could be done that did not seek the co-ordinate development of mind and soul. He soon created the opportunity to exemplify his theory. On the afternoon of November 19, 1882, he brought the Bishop to a hired room where he met the few members of the old organization. Steps towards reorganization were taken then and there. On the following Friday the Rev. Chester Newell, hearing of the proposed undertaking, gave the Bishop a

lot at Kushla, a small neighboring village, the proceeds of sale (ultimately about \$300) to be applied to the erection of a new church of the Good Shepherd. With about twelve hundred dollars available (given by friends in New York) the building was begun. So soon as work actually commenced help came from outside sources. Within a year six thousand dollars had been expended in the purchase of the ground, the erection of church, rectory, and school-house, and the purchase of suitable furniture. The most liberal contributors to the support of the school, then and thereafter, were Mr. William Butler Duncan, of New York, and the Rev. Dr. Saul, of Philadelphia. The day-school was named in honor of the latter. A Negro man became lay-reader, and held services. Mr. Johnston preached regularly and frequently. At the end of the year there were fourteen communicants and six candidates for confirmation, a day-school of thirty-nine pupils, and a Sunday school of one hundred.

The Rev. Joseph L. Tucker, rector of Christ Church, maintained nominal supervision of the mission for about one year. Then it became evident that this temporary arrangement must give way to the settlement of a minister-in-residence, who could give his entire time and attention to the work. The Bishop had said that the building should be attractive, the service in great part choral, and all things adapted to the characteristics of the people, and that, in his opinion, the offices of the Prayer Book were peculiarly suited to the Negro's needs, and could rubrically be so rendered as to adapt them to his tastes. Accordingly he sought a minister that would conduct the

services at the Good Shepherd in accordance with his views.

Such a one was found in the person of the Rev. A. Wallace Pierce, son of the Bishop of Arkansas. Mr. Pierce took charge in May, 1885. The day-school had increased to nearly sixty pupils, who were taught by two of the deaconesses from the Church Home, but the Sunday-school had not increased, and the number of communicants was only ten; and of these six were newly confirmed. The new minister at once established a ritual never before or since equalled in the diocese, introducing the Eastward Position, Eucharistic and Vesper Lights, Eucharistic vestments, Choral celebrations of the Holy Communion and daily Offices, and Incense. He gave himself entirely and unreservedly to the work, living in the rectory and going in and out among the Negroes with as much freedom as if he were a missionary in Darkest Africa—perchance with more. On account of thus placing himself on the social plane of his congregation he soon met with several rebuffs from former friends. In order to prevent possible repetition of such disagreeable incidents he cut himself off entirely from the society of his own race, abjured diocesan meetings, and was approached by individual clergymen with great difficulty. His doctrine was as high as his ritual was elaborate, and his self-sacrifice was carried far beyond necessity and the highest wisdom. But whatever it was possible to do for the welfare of his people he did, and for seven years he gave every energy of body, mind, and soul to the material and

spiritual advancement of his congregation. In the day-school an industrial department was added, and the girls were taught to sew, wash, iron, cook, and generally to prepare to earn their own living honestly and virtuously. In 1892 Mr. Pierce moved to another sphere of labor.

Mr. Pierce was succeeded by the Rev. Joseph L. Berne, who conducted the services along the lines pursued by his predecessor, but adopted other methods of pastoral care. The change did not prove of advantage to the work. Congregations dwindled week by week, the Sunday-school fell off two-thirds, and few of the pupils in day-school and Sunday-school came to Confirmation. In 1896 it was determined that the prosperity, almost the continuance, of the work demanded the ministrations of a clergyman who could enter into his people's mode of thought. In that year a Negro priest, the Rev. James J. N. Thompson, took charge. Subsequent growth has been encouraging, the communicants having been increased in a single year by twenty-five and the parishioners by one hundred per cent.

It had never been the Bishop's desire to attempt the organization of Negro congregations in the rural districts. He contended that the only reasonably hopeful fields were the cities and larger towns, where, as with whites so with blacks, the mind is more open to conviction and to the formation of new habits. Yet for many years no other place followed Mobile's lead; no other place, because no other clergyman. Not until 1891 was the second Negro congre-

gation in Alabama founded—that of St. Mark's, Birmingham. The Rev. J. A. Van Hoose fathered the work, and its success has been due to his own personal interest. This work is still in the experimental stage, but if the past is the criterion of the future the wisdom of its methods and the energy manifested in their application make sure a success equal at least to that achieved in Mobile. Valuable gifts have been made, and a large brick building for an industrial school is completed. The entire property owned by St. Mark's mission, Birmingham, is valued at sixteen thousand dollars. That of the mission of the Good Shepherd, Mobile, is valued at twelve thousand dollars.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE ORPHANS' HOME.

WHEN the Convention of 1865 met in Greensboro Bishop Wilmer was able to announce the successful beginning, at Tuscaloosa, of the Church Home for Orphans, the purchase of suitable property and the possession of certain funds for investment.

Within ten days after the Convention's adjournment the prospect for the orphans was gloomy. Lee had surrendered, Davis had been captured, and Watts arrested—the President, the General, and the Governor—and the Confederate bonds and certificates which constituted the bulk of subscriptions to the Orphans' Home were worthless. The support of the orphans had been swept away, save a few bales of cotton into which the Bishop had wisely converted four thousand dollars of Confederate money. On the proceeds of this cotton, together with what personal solicitation secured from the small pantries and smoke-houses of the surrounding country, the institution was supported nearly three years.

Early in 1867 the Church Home property in Tuscaloosa, which had cost thirty thousand dollars in Confederate money, was sold for two thousand dollars in gold; and right glad the Bishop was to make the sale. Litigation of a tedious and expensive nature had arisen almost the day the property was purchased, and when the sale was effected, the title made per-

fect, and the lawyers were satisfied, fifteen hundred dollars remained. With this the orphans were removed to Mobile and settled in a two-room house on a lot given by St. John's parish. Two of the three deaconesses had for the last two years been engaged in conducting a girls' school at Spring Hill, and the orphans had been in charge of the other deaconess and the probationers; but the work of the Sisterhood was henceforth to be concentrated on the Home. The school was rented out and the sisters came into town.

The enterprise was commenced with difficulty, and at first met every possible discouragement. The Bishop's wisdom in bringing the orphans to Mobile was seriously questioned. The city was impoverished. The Church already owned a fourth interest in the Protestant Orphan Asylum, and Churchmen could not see the necessity for a distinctly Church home for orphans. Outside of Mobile, however, the removal gave great satisfaction. Orphans were sent in abundance from the interior; but strangely enough the communities that sent the orphans uniformly forgot to send any money along with them. The congregations in the interior believed in the economic principle of division of labor—they would undertake to supply orphans if Mobile would agree to support them. The Bishop felt this inequality and attempted, but unsuccessfully, to make the inland towns feel it. One of the reasons why he had established the school at Spring Hill was to provide revenue for the Home; but the revenue was insignificant and the load proved too heavy for the deaconesses in charge.

Race, creed, and denomination of parents were not the criteria of admission into the Home. The orphan was an orphan, whether it was a legitimate child or an illegitimate, and it demanded succor whether it was of Italian or of American descent. Only two things were pre-requisite to admittance: That neither parent was living, and that the child was destitute. The Home was a venture based on faith in God and confidence in humanity. At the outset the faith was exercised, the trial was met successfully, and the reward has continued uninterruptedly and in overflowing measure to the present day. A butcher, not a Churchman, died and left three children for whom there were no relatives to provide. By the Bishop's direction the children were brought to the Home and were there carefully nurtured until they were able to go forth to earn their own living. The butchers of Mobile felt that such kindness to one of their number was a kindness to all, and they manifested their appreciation in a manner possibly without parallel. In the many years that have passed they have supplied the Homes with all the fresh meat that they use, and have never for a day wavered in their generosity. Money is invariably offered; it is invariably refused.\*

Not only to the butchers but to the entire city did the Home commend itself by its breadth of spirit, and not only the butchers but the entire city made ready and generous response. Given more freely to worldliness and grosser vices than any other city in the state,

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\* It is worthy of note that not one of the five orphanages in Mobile ever has to pay for fresh meat.

Mobile has ever manifested a zeal and liberality towards institutions of beneficence that no other city in the state has even remotely approximated. Much has been forgiven her because she has loved much. Her very pleasure seeking she has turned into an instrument of mercy. The mad revelry of Shrove Tuesday, or "Mardi Gras," gave opportunity for a "Bazaar," which turned into the treasury of the Church Home about two thousand dollars annually.\* Once in every year a society of train-men ran an excursion to Biloxi, Miss., and gave the proceeds to the orphans' homes in the city, the Church Home's share being one-fourth. Besides these organized benefactions individual gifts were large and constant.

But while all praise should be given the people of Mobile for their liberal contributions to this institution, the building of the endowment fund must be credited entirely to the economy of the deaconesses, which left a surplus from the yearly receipts, and to the sagacity of the Bishop in administering the funds thus saved. While the entire income was not more than three thousand dollars a year, one-half of this sum sufficed to support sixty persons.

The remainder, except what was put in real estate, was invested, as it came to hand, in interest-bearing securities. At first the money was lent on individual notes. Then, as the amount grew larger, it was lent

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\* In justice to the interior parishes it should be stated that not a few of them—notably Montgomery, Selma, Greensboro, Tuscaloosa—were liberal contributors, especially of articles for sale, to these Bazaars.

to private banking houses. Then when the solvency of the banks became doubtful the investment was changed to bonds of the county of Mobile. Only six thousand dollars was thus invested; and when the endowment grew beyond this it was invested in Alabama bonds, the Bishop as fiduciary preferring security to income. Alabama bonds were then at a discount, on account of the vast increase of the public debt in reconstruction times; but some men had confidence in the State's power of recuperation, in the stability of her credit, and in the inevitable appreciation of her bonds. Fortunate was it for the Church and the Church Home that the Bishop of Alabama was one whose faith in Alabama had not been shaken. The first bonds that Bishop Wilmer bought for the Church Home cost from one-half to three-fourths of their face value, and bore from two to seven per cent. The latter bonds, known as "Class A," were the most profitable investment; for they increased regularly in the rate of interest, and, from paying three and four per cent on the investment when they were purchased, are now paying eight and ten per cent. The appreciation of these securities was remarkably rapid, a bond that cost only \$490 in 1879 costing \$822 three years later. It was certain that these bonds would go to par, and at every opportunity the Bishop increased his holdings. Every batch, almost every bond, cost more than the last purchase. After 1887 all bonds were bought at a premium.

Meanwhile the Home was enlarged in scope, a new department for boys was opened in another street, and

several lots were purchased to meet the hygienic demands of the present and the certain development of the future. Yet by virtue of the liberality of Mobile, the frugality of the deaconesses, and the sagacity of the Bishop, it came to pass that one day in 1896 Bishop Wilmer was able to announce to the people of Alabama that the Church Homes for Orphans had completed their endowment fund of \$40,000, and that this amount was securely invested in registered bonds of the State of Alabama.



## CHAPTER IX.

### THE CASE OF HAMNER HALL.

**I**T is a wide-spread delusion that the letter and the spirit of any law or agreement stand in such relationship to each other that obedience to the spirit is possible only through disobedience to the letter. Always the letter must yield to the spirit, and justice to generosity. They who contend for exact obedience to the letter are termed formalists, and they who are unwilling to pay for generosity to one person by injustice to another are looked upon as hard-hearted.

These reflections are occasioned by a review of the many sharp conflicts and wide divergences of opinion and mutual recriminations that arose and held sway in diocesan Conventions through twenty years and more concerning the proper disposition of the Hamner Hall property in Montgomery. Through this period the property in question was developing legally and justly from an institution for the education of the young Churchmen of Alabama into the bulk of the Episcopal Endowment Fund, and through the same period uninformed amiability and illogical sentiment were enacting anew, and with the old-time result, the role of Dame Partington. The physical laws that govern tides and storms are not more clearly the laws of God than are those moral laws by which this metamorphosis was guided.

We have already seen that Hamner Hall was opened

as the diocesan school for girls in October, 1860, and that the school was immediately successful. But for two years the work was handicapped by lack of suitable buildings, the present structure not being ready for occupancy till 1862. According to the original contract no rent was chargeable for this time, and into so much confusion did the Civil War throw all business that no attempt was made to collect payment of rent for the next three years. When the War ceased and satisfactory terms could not be made with Mr. Shepherd, the school was transferred to Prof. H. P. Lefebvre, who took charge in October, 1865, and conducted it in a thoroughly satisfactory manner till his death, four years later.

Meanwhile, in 1863, the trustees of Hamner Hall borrowed from the trustees of the Bishop's Fund the sum of \$4,968. It was from this loan that all subsequent complications arose. The Hamner Hall trustees were empowered by the incorporating act of the Legislature to sell or dispose of the property belonging to the corporation, and to borrow money and pledge the property of the corporation as security for the debt. The sum that they borrowed under such authority was for the purpose of making final payment for the erection of the school-building. This debt was not secured by mortgage, the simple notes of the trustees being deemed ample security; nevertheless the property was liable, both morally and legally, for the payment of the loan.

On this debt no payment, whether of principal or

of interest, was ever made by the trustees of Hamner Hall.

The creation of the debt immediately altered the responsibility of the trustees. Originally holding the property in trust for a girls' school, but subsequently in the execution of their trust incurring a debt, they thenceforward held the property in trust for two separate and distinct objects: *1st*, The payment of the debt; *2nd*, The education of the girls of Alabama. The original trust was displaced by the debt, whose payment now became, both legally and morally, the superior obligation. No transaction could now, either legally or morally, ignore the full payment of the debt with accrued interest. Failure to grasp this point of even worldly ethics was the cause of much of the ensuing discussion.

Seven years passed, and the indebtedness remained unsettled. Throughout this time no interest was paid to the trustees of the Bishop's Fund; and Hamner Hall enjoyed the benefit of nearly five thousand dollars that had been given to endow the Episcopate and thus relieve parish treasuries. Considerable restlessness began to appear, culminating in 1870, when the Rev. Horace Stringfellow, D. D., who had recently become rector of St. John's Church, Montgomery, proposed to his vestry that St. John's parish buy the Hamner Hall property and make it a parish school. Dr. Stringfellow had viewed with much dissatisfaction the closing of the school after Prof. Lefebvre's death; no one had been found worthy to undertake its management; and Dr. Stringfellow determined to explore

its possibilities under parochial instead of diocesan auspices. St. John's vestry agreed to Dr. Stringfellow's proposition, a special committee of the Convention agreed with the vestry, and the Convention with its committee; the trustees of Hamner Hall looked favorably on a plan that promised to re-open the school, relieve them from further responsibility, and settle their indebtedness to the trustees of the Bishop's Fund; and the trustees of the Bishop's Fund felt that this transfer, by which the security for the debt would be increased, was the only escape from the alternatives of loss of their loan to Hamner Hall, or alienation of Hamner Hall from educational purposes. So with the free consent and glad approval of all concerned a quadrilateral agreement was made to the following effect: The vestry of St. John's Church bought Hamner Hall from its trustees. As payment the vestry assumed the debt of the trustees of Hamner Hall to the trustees of the Bishop's Fund. As security for the payment of this debt the vestry gave the trustees of the Bishop's Fund their note for five thousand dollars with interest, the note being payable in five years, and the mortgage being foreclosable, not simply upon failure to pay the principal at maturity, but also upon the first default in annual interest. The school was not to be diverted from the educational and charitable purposes to which it had been dedicated.

Two things in this agreement must be held in view: *1st*, The only legal effect of the transfer was to make the vestry of St. John's Church the trustees of Ham-

ner Hall. The conditions of the trust were not changed by the change of trustees. The self-imposed trust for education was still subordinate to the state-imposed trust for the payment of a debt contracted in the execution of the original trust. *2nd*, The Convention acted with generosity towards St. John's Church, and injustice towards the Bishop's Fund, in agreeing that five thousand dollars should be accepted in full payment for a debt that amounted to seven thousand five hundred dollars. Every other parish in the State must contribute towards the difference.

However, as the event proved, it mattered not how much or how little was conceded. Hamner Hall was conducted as a girls' school two years longer, and during that time St. John's paid the interest on the debt. But in 1873 the girls' school was declared a failure, and Hamner Hall was converted into a boys' school, Francis K. Meade, of Virginia, becoming principal. Thereafter St. John's defaulted in interest every year. Still the trustees of the Bishop's Fund were lenient, and even when, in 1875, the principal fell due and was not paid, no foreclosure was made.

Four years passed, and still the debt was unsettled, and still the interest, which itself might have been at work, was unpaid. Finally, in 1879, a settlement was made, which, it was thought, was final. The parties to the agreement were the rector and delegation of St. John's, on the one hand—Dr. Stringfellow, Joel White, John L. Cobbs, Charles T. Pollard, Powhatan Lockett, and Josiah Morris—and a special committee of the Convention, on the other,—the Rev. R.

H. Cobbs, the Rev. S. U. Smith, A. Benners, and Henry D. Clayton. Their settlement was adopted by the Convention. It was as follows: The trustees of the Bishop's Fund accepted from the vestry of St. John's parish a conveyance of the entire Hamner Hall property, including the Bishop Cobbs Orphans' Home, in satisfaction of the mortgage debt and accrued interest; but in consideration of the sum expended by St. John's parish in erecting the Orphans' Home, St. John's was to retain the use of that portion of the property till it should be needed as the residence of a future bishop. The debt for which St. John's was legally liable was seven thousand dollars, and Hamner Hall was accepted in lieu thereof. So, after many years, the Bishop's Fund had come into absolute possession of a piece of property whose immediate value was certainly not greater than the debt, and whose prospective value was purely conjectural. The trustees of the Bishop's Fund had apparently made a losing investment in lending Hamner Hall money.

During the seven years that now elapsed (1879-1886), the Hamner Hall property was a veritable white elephant to the Bishop's Fund. A six-years' contract was made with the Rev. George M. Everhart, D. D., who undertook to revive the girls' school. No rental was charged the first year, and the entire rental of the next two years was expended in repairs. Subsequently still larger amounts were allowed for repairs, and at the expiration of the lease the property had cost more than the rental had yielded. Nevertheless in 1885 the lease was renewed for a term of four years



at an annual rental of \$560, but the "extraordinary repairs" that were paid for out of this sum reduced the net income considerably. So, until 1887, the Hamner Hall property was a dead expense to the Bishop's Fund, and money that should have been helping the parishes pay the Bishop's salary was expended for the benefit of a school that was really a private venture and in no way under diocesan supervision. The Bishop's Fund had not found in Hamner Hall a Golconda; but now it began to dawn upon the trustees, and, a little later, upon others, that in the end the investment might be made profitable. Montgomery was growing, and from a straggling town of twelve thousand souls of whom one half were Negroes, bade fair to be the leading city of Alabama. In every part of the town property values were growing healthily. This growth of population and appreciation in values was most marked in the southwestern portion of the city, in the vicinity of Hamner Hall, and this property now came to be looked upon as having great financial possibilities. Very shortly it was valued at several times its original cost. To its ultimate value none dared set a limit.

At this juncture a few clergymen and laymen, overzealous for the cause of education, made certain propositions which were formulated and urged by the Rev. Dr. Everhart, lessee of the school. In a pamphlet published by this reverend gentleman in 1887 the position was taken that no portion of the Hamner Hall property could justly be devoted to the support of the Episcopate, save the amount of principal and

interest of the debt of St. John's parish to the Bishop's Fund, and that after this claim was satisfied the remainder of the property, which he estimated as worth two hundred thousand dollars (so incredibly inflated were prices), should be held in trust for a Girls' School, which, with such an endowment, could be maintained with merely nominal tuition.

It was a position that many have taken under similar circumstances. It was a position that none was ever known to take when the property taken for debt decreased in value. Hamner Hall, when accepted by the trustees of the Bishop's Fund was not worth more than the debt of St. John's parish for which it was received. Subsequent fluctuations of value were matters of concern to the Bishop's Fund alone. Had the property at forced sale brought less than the debt, none would have suggested that the deficit would be a perpetual claim against any diocesan girls' school of the future. If there was no responsibility under adversity, there could be no privilege in prosperity. The Bishop's Fund was not wedded to education "for better," unless also "for worse."\*

Dr. Everhart's untenable position was not long left unassailed. The trustees of the Bishop's Fund—N. H. R. Dawson, of Selma, and J. H. Fitts, of Tuska-

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\* The celebrated case of *Gilmer vs. Josiah Morris*, which was fought all through the state and Federal courts, hinges on precisely the principles involved in this case of Hamner Hall. It is well worth studying in connection with this chapter, as it was decided in accordance with the views enunciated in the last paragraph written above.

loosa—submitted to the ensuing Council a voluminous report in which they reviewed the history of Hamner Hall with great minuteness and demonstrated the legal and the ethical unsoundness of Dr. Everhart's contention. Their language was not lacking in vigor: "You are requested to spoliage and destroy a sacred trust;" "The purpose of these persons is to wrest this property from the possession of the present owners, thus subverting the design of the original founders and destroying at one single blow the morals and good faith of the Convention."

It has generally been the diocesan Council's custom to postpone consideration of momentous matters for at least twelve months, especially when discussion has engendered or threatens to engender acrimony. In this case the Council of 1887 was true to its tradition. A warm discussion followed the trustees report, and the temperature of the Council was rapidly nearing 212° Fahrenheit when the entire matter was, in the interest of harmony, referred to a committee of three lawyers, with instructions to report to the next annual Council the legal status of Hamner Hall. This committee, consisting of F. B. Clark, Jr., of Mobile, and H. C. Tompkins and Horace Stringfellow, Jr., of Montgomery, made a clear, succinct report the following year, fully upholding the report of the trustees of the Bishop's Fund, showing that the increased value of the property was wholly irrelevant to the question of ownership, and concluding with the pregnant, comprehensive words: "The proceeds of such sale [i. e., should the trustees see fit to sell the property],

regardless of the amount it may bring, will be subject to the same trusts that the other property and money held by the trustees of the Bishop's Fund is subject to, and will be subject to none other." The Council concurred in this report.

Dr. Everhart's lease expired the following year (1889). For the last few years the school had not been successful, either numerically or financially, and the lessee did not care to continue longer his thankless attempt. No one else came forward to lengthen the list of failures. The property was therefore rented, first as a boarding-house, and afterwards as a private school for boys. A street was opened along the south side, and another at right angles to this, dividing the whole property into two equal parts. That on the east was subdivided into building lots, and many of these lots being sold on deferred payments with legal interest, the Bishop's Fund was soon growing rapidly from the constant accretion of these small sums, and the proceeds were promptly invested in registered Alabama bonds.

Some lots still remain to be sold. The school building and surrounding lot are rented, and are held by direction of the Council in hope that changed conditions will yet make the school the nursery of the Churchwomen of Alabama.

Inasmuch as the Churchmen of Alabama have been admonished, collectively and individually, that the failure of Hamner Hall as a diocesan school for girls has been a rebuke to their Churchmanship, and have been advised to increase their shame by considering

the prosperity of denominational schools, especially of Baptist and Methodist schools, it is not amiss to inquire what ground exists for rebuke and self-accusation.

Hamner Hall was dependent, of course, on two classes of pupils—day pupils and boarding pupils. The parents of day pupils demand two things of a girls' school—accessibility and reasonable expense. Hamner Hall met neither of these demands. It would have been hard to locate in Montgomery a more inaccessible school. The majority of prospective patrons lived a mile or more away. In its earlier days public conveyances were lacking. Later on mule-cars brought the school nearer some of the pupils; but about this time the public school system sprang into prominence. These public schools were good. Their pupils received instruction at least as thorough as that given in private schools. Parents began to tire of paying tuition at one school while yet they were taxed to support another. Little by little the local patronage fell away, and the strenuous efforts made to counteract the inevitable were futile.

Different causes operated to reduce the boarding patronage. "Church School" was the shibboleth at first, but later it could not be relied on to hold Churchmen. Denominational schools have no reason for being unless they inculcate denominational teaching—that is, the Gospel as understood by the denomination to which appeal is made. So, a Church school that suppresses, or even neglects, any legitimate Church influence, ceases to have any claim on Churchmen on

the ground that they are Churchmen. It may have a most excellent corps of teachers, a thorough curriculum, and an educator of note at its head, but if the teachers are chosen from different religious bodies for the purpose of drawing pupils from families connected with this denomination or that, and if, when these pupils are secured, certain changes are made in the devotional exercises, habits, and regulations of the school, in order that their feelings may not be hurt, then the school becomes to all intents and purposes simply a "non-denominational school," the strongest reason that could impel Churchmen to send their daughters to an expensive school is deliberately destroyed, and the most zealous Churchman is free to select that or any other "non-denominational school." This objection was raised against Hamner Hall school, if not justly, still for no inconsiderable portion of its existence. It was altogether legitimate for a lessee of the property to conduct the school according to his own plans and ideals. But when this was done without regard to the demands of Churchmanship the *esprit du corps* of the Church-folk of Alabama could no longer be invoked legitimately.\*

Reference has been made to the matter of expense.

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\* In at least one portion of its existence this objection to Hamner Hall had no ground. In 1881 Dr. Everhart made the following report of religious exercises: "The chapel services consist of the Morning Prayer, beginning with the Lord's Prayer, and omitting one Lesson, and substituting more appropriate Collects for some of those in the regular order. On Fridays, the Litany is intoned. All the services are choral in part, except *Compline*."



This was a potent factor in the decay of the school. A Church school must be conducted along economical lines. Its charges must bear some proportion to the financial ability of its prospective patrons. No matter how large are the salaries of high-priced teachers and the expenses of proffered luxuries, there is a limit beyond which parents, however appreciative, cannot go. Almost every boarding-pupil represents some self-sacrifice at home, and when luxury for daughters means drudgery for mothers it is small wonder that fathers send their children to schools where the curriculum is not inferior, though luxury and the cost thereof are markedly less. The management of Hamner Hall fell into the error of supposing that the Churchmen of Alabama were, as a rule, wealthy; the charges were made according to the supposition; and Church girls went to lower-priced schools.

The strongest reason for the failure of the school as a diocesan institution remains to be considered. The strength of boarding-schools is in the villages and the country, where local educational advantages are meager. They receive few pupils from the cities and larger towns. Where boarding pupils for a Church-school were to be obtained if obtained at all, just there Churchmen were found in the smallest proportion. Always three-fourths of the Churchmen of Alabama have lived in the towns and cities. The boarding-pupils must come from the other one-fourth. This fraction comprised about four hundred families. Four hundred country families yield few boarding pupils

to even the lowest-priced schools. To Hamner Hall they yielded a mere handful.

These causes, then,—the inaccessibility of the school to day-pupils, the rise of the public-school system, the reputedly interdenominational character of the school, the great expense, and the unfavorable distribution of Churchmen—sufficiently explain the failure of Hamner Hall as a diocesan school for girls, and explain it without reflection upon the laity of Alabama. The diocese will never have in successful operation the girls' school that it needs until women consecrated to God shall, with expectations of naught but their daily bread, give themselves to the cause. Thus the school shall rise superior to unfavorable conditions, and furnish forth a higher, Christian, Churchly education, at a cost commensurate with the ability of the great body of our laity.

## CHAPTER X.

### EDIFICATION AND DEMOLITION.

THE half-century of diocesan life now closing has been marked by three waves of prosperity, followed by three troughs of depression.

The first wave-length embraced the closing days of Bishop Cobbs' episcopate and the years of civil war.

The second began in the early days of peace, and ended with the financial panic of 1873.

The third followed close upon the cessation of general insecurity, and overlapped the local catastrophe of "Boom Times," by which social and diocesan conditions of life were revolutionized.

Through the entire fifty years edification and demolition have never been far apart, yet through all the changes the progress of the diocese, though peculiar, has been steady. It now becomes our task to point out and study the conditions of this growth through the last two periods.

When peace was restored the diocese was slow to take her bearings. Alabama had been the least troubled section of the South, and many clergymen and laymen had sought a measure of peace and quiet within its borders. At the close of the war most of these strangers went back home. The departure of the clergy left a number of parishes vacant, and the departure of the laymen impaired the finances of other congregations. In Montgomery an entire par-

ish was thus obliterated. Many refugees from Pensacola, Fla., had come to Montgomery, and with them their minister, the Rev. J. J. Scott, formerly a clergyman of this diocese. These organized the parish of the Holy Comforter in May, 1864. In another year or two the rector and almost the whole congregation had returned to Pensacola. The remnant, a few Montgomerians that had attached themselves to an exotic congregation, maintained a nominal organization for two or three years longer, under the rectorship of the Rev. J. H. Ticknor; but the parish died at the early age of five years.

In the single Conventional year of 1865-6 letters dimissory were given to twelve clergymen, who constituted more than one-third of the entire clerical force. Their departure was a serious loss to the diocese, for among them were John W. Beckwith, afterwards Bishop of Georgia; A. Gordon Bakewell, now of New Orleans; Henry Sansom, now of Vicksburg; and George F. Cushman, who had been chosen to preach the Council sermon in memory of Bishop Cobbs, and who afterwards was associate editor of *The Churchman*. Demopolis and Selma were doubly bereaved; their ministers were not, and their churches had been burned by Federal soldiers.

There was much, indeed, to discourage, but the prospect was not of Cimmerian darkness. Northern dioceses and ecclesiastics were emphasizing and strengthening the unity of the Church by proffering little courtesies to their sisters and brethren in the afflicted South. Gladly did wealthy Churchmen of

the East help the crippled missionary work of the South to its feet; and their liberality was unstinted until it was checked by the misunderstandings of reconstruction days. The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society appropriated three thousand dollars for a single year's work in the diocese, and in the same year a layman of Louisville, Ky., gave a thousand dollars more. With four thousand dollars from without the diocese the Bishop was enabled for a short time to put in execution his cherished plan of sending out evangelists to care for the scattered handfuls of people that were not under the stated ministrations of any other clergyman. The Rev. W. J. Perdue was evangelist along the Selma, Rome & Dalton Railroad, with headquarters at Wilsonville, and the Rev. Thomas J. Beard for North Alabama, with headquarters at Athens. No report was ever made of Mr. Perdue's work, but the reports of Mr. Beard showed that he was holding stated services at Maysville, Madison Station, Mooresville, Athens, Decatur, Tusculumbia, Florence, Triana, and Courtland. Throughout this field the prospects were especially promising.

Bishop Wilmer was much pleased with his twelve months' evangelistic experiment, and sought at the beginning of the next year to add yet another to the corps of workers. Along the line that may be said to divide Middle and North Alabama the Church was unusually weak; but the few communicants scattered here and there were Christians and Churchmen. They were also possible nuclei of congregations. At Elyton, Montevallo, Alpine, Harpersville, Talladega,

Gainesville, Jonesboro, Lime Kiln, Silver Run, and Brierfield, were from two to fourteen communicants each. For this virgin field which Mr. Perdue seems scarcely to have touched the Bishop was earnestly seeking a missionary of the necessary staying and moving powers ; when one day he was notified by the Domestic and Foreign Missionary, which was at that time beginning to extend foreign missions at the expense of domestic, that it had cut off twelve hundred dollars from the appropriation to Alabama. In the face of this reduction extension was out of the question ; it were well to support what was already in hand. The diocese was straining every nerve to give the clergy a scanty and uncertain support. No fixed amount was promised the Bishop ; and, except a few of the more favored in old and substantial parishes, all the clergy, from bishop to youngest deacon, were entirely dependent on voluntary offerings, and were harassed with those temporal cares from which they should have been free, but which, since they must bear them, enabled them to sympathize as never before with their people. A reduced force, the result of their labors was unprecedented in the history of diocese.

There was no fatalistic yielding to circumstances, and no Micawberish waiting for something to turn up. Many were the schemes, some fruitless, some fruitful, for the welfare of the diocese. A few of these deserve notice : The publication of a Church paper, and the attempts to organize the missionary work and to systematize the financial operations of the Church.



The publication of a diocesan paper was suggested as early as 1867. The project was licked into shape in two Conventions, and in June, 1868, the paper was launched with the name *The Church Register*. The Rev. J. H. Ticknor of Montgomery was at the helm. It was literally a venture of faith. Today when Churchmen in this diocese and throughout the South are twice and thrice as numerous as they were thirty years ago, the projector of a weekly Church journal, to be published in this portion of the country, would be a bold man. Mr. Ticknor's confidence was soon and rudely dispelled. Though the paper was cordially endorsed by the Bishops of Mississippi and Louisiana, and they promised to urge its circulation in their respective dioceses, the bulk of the circulation must be in Alabama. It was hoped that the weekly visits of such a paper, given, as it was, less to news than to instruction, would be the means of enlarging the borders of the Church. But faith does not come by reading, and the non-Churchman to whom appeal was made was the very man that could not be persuaded to read what was written for him. A few of the faithful were marvellously edified, but the paper failed to achieve its main purpose. It was well edited, and Mr. Ticknor labored unselfishly and untiringly to keep it alive; but he was in the field fifty years too soon, and finally succumbed to the apathy and lukewarmness that are the common attitude of many of the clergy and most of the laity towards Church periodicals, whether general or diocesan. Three other attempts at a diocesan paper have since been made. In

1878 the Rev. George H. Hunt of Tuscaloosa tested the diocese with a monthly twenty-four-page magazine, *The Old Church Path*, which, though with few superiors in the plainness, directness, and simplicity of its instruction, was also but short-lived. In 1889 the Rev. L. W. Rose of Birmingham published *The Alabama Churchman* for a few months. Not until 1892 was a diocesan paper permanently established. Its first name, *The Diocese of Alabama*, proving unwieldly and confusing, was after a year changed to *The Church Record*. It was first published in Montgomery, but was after two years removed to Tuscaloosa, where it is now located. It has been of invaluable assistance in keeping the various portions and interests of the diocese in touch with one another.

Bishop Wilmer insisted from the first that what the diocese needed for its financial salvation was system. Somehow it had become the tradition that faith and method were opposed to each other, that the weekly pledge destroyed the free-will offering, that to tie one's camel was to evince distrust of God. But fervent annual appeals and spasmodic efforts are not the way that either reason or revelation teaches us is best to meet demands that are not spasmodic. Persistent expenses must be met, if they are to be met properly, by perennial income.

In like manner the evangelization of Alabama must not be by haphazard methods, but according to settled plan and on well-defined responsibility. This responsibility rested ultimately on the shoulders of the Bishop. He was encouraged to go forward, but he

was not provided with funds for the maintenance of outposts. He had no appointed advisers as to the disposition of the missionaries and the allotment of funds. Such trust showed perfect confidence in the Bishop. It worked well in the outgo, because it fixed on one man the whole responsibility for wise expenditure ; but it worked ill in the income, because " the diocese " bore that responsibility, and in matters having no legal bearing the diocese is always an intangible entity without identity.

The Bishop sought such organization of the missionary work in its executive department as would delegate to the parochial clergy and the laity a portion of the responsibility that he was bearing, and arouse in them as individuals a sense of the necessity for systematic endeavor to develop the sinews of war. His leading idea was to divide the diocese into Convocations, and make each Convocation answerable for Church extension within its borders. The Convention of 1869 fell in with this plan and adopted a quasi convocational system. The Convocations were to be five in number and were to be known as the Convocations of Mobile, Montgomery, Selma, Demopolis, and Huntsville. Each Convocation was to be autonomous, with such officers and regulations as were not in conflict with the diocesan law.\*

Unhappily, these Convocations did not come to the birth. For a year or so, it is true, two or three clergy-

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\* The proposed distribution of Convocations gives incidental witness to the congestion of the Church in the Black Belt—three out of the five Convocations being in that region.

men would meet in one another's parish and hold double daily services after the fashion of a Virginia "Association"; the visiting clergy were dined (and sometimes wined) from house to house, and were encouraged (and sometimes puffed up) by the praise of men. Such services were not without good effect on the established congregations, but they were not fulfilling the purpose for which Convocations were desired. No aggressive and sustained missionary operations were planned and undertaken, and the great majority of the clergy, content with the isolation of parochial life, were utterly indifferent to the movement.

After a sleep of two years an attempt was made to infuse life into the project. Convocations had been established by "resolution" of the Convention. In the diocese were some good men that attributed the failure of the Convocational system entirely to the manner in which it had originated. They had great faith in canons, and contended that if the system could base itself on a canon instead of a resolution it would be sure to succeed. It happened, however, that there also lived in the diocese some influential clergymen and laymen to whom the "Digest of Canons" was peculiarly sacred. In their eyes its sanctity would be desecrated by the settlement therein of any "Title," "Canon," "Section," or "Paragraph," that had not been tried and examined, in every bone, and nerve, and muscle, for at least two and preferably three or four consecutive Conventions. These were in sufficient force to prevent the proposed canon, "Of Convo-

cations," from becoming a law immediately; and the Convention spent several years in discussing and amending the canon, and postponing consideration of it from each annual session to the next.\* They were sublimely unmindful of the inconsistency that they manifested in refusing to do with the right hand what they had already done with the left.

Finally, in 1873, the Convention adopted a canon that provided for the establishment of Convocations. Their number and their boundaries were left to the Bishop's determination; the Bishop also was to confer upon the presiding officer of each Convocation such ecclesiastical title—Dean, Archdeacon, or what not?—as he saw fit; and every minister was to give four Sundays in the year to such missionary work within the Convocation as the presiding officer should assign—his expenses to be paid out of the missionary treasury.

Acting under the provisions of this canon, Bishop Wilmer, on May 20, 1873, set forth the four Convocations of Huntsville, Tuscaloosa, Selma, and Montgomery, gave the title of "Dean" to their presiding officers, and appointed as Deans the Rev. Messrs. J. M. Banister, D. D., George H. Hunt, F. R. Hanson, and Horace Stringfellow, D. D. Two years later he called into being the Mobile Convocation—scarcely more than a clericus—and appointed the Rev. J. A. Massey, D. D., Dean. These first Deans were imbued

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\* In 1893 a special committee was appointed to revise the entire digest. At this writing (1898) it has not yet made its report.

with missionary spirit; but as the records of convocational work were carelessly kept, easily misplaced, and soon lost, and the Deans themselves made only oral reports to the Convention, our knowledge of the specific undertakings of convocations is meager, being limited, in fact, to one item: That the Birmingham (formerly the Tuskaloosa) Convocation\* had determined to concentrate its efforts upon Gadsden. It may be stated comprehensively that some of the clergy gave a few services when called upon, that the Convocations occasionally held sessions, that the work was done almost exclusively by the Deans, that the Deans aroused their own congregations and others to give more freely to diocesan missions, and that the burden of securing not only the missionaries, but also their stipends, was lifted as to its latter part from the Bishop's shoulders.

Meanwhile no little energy was manifested in other lines of work. The Rev. Robert Jope's Boys' School at Summerville, Mobile, had a brief existence. The Orphans' Home at Huntsville, for which a fund was accumulating year after year, never materialized. The Rev. J. F. Smith's attempts at Autaugaville and Snowdown, at the latter place of which a building fund of twelve hundred dollars was once in hand, were the beginning of a long series of dissolving views wherein faithful work was so often annihilated, as to corporate continuance, by the removal of all the congregation to other places. The same failure seemed to attend many of the efforts in East Ala-

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\* The change of name was made in 1885.



bama, where services were undertaken at Mount Meigs, Chunnanuggee, Oswichee, Seale, Cross Keys, Tallassee, and Auburn. At some of these points church buildings were erected, for a time occupied, and finally deserted and uncared for till they either were removed or rotted down. After twenty years new congregations appeared at Auburn and Mount Meigs; over the others death still reigns. But in this period were born the congregations at Birmingham, Talladega, Decatur, Union Springs, and Evergreen; while Montgomery (St. John's), Selma, Opelika, Greensboro, Demopolis, Hayneville, and Montevallo, were building themselves houses of worship, noble or simple, ornate or unpretending, according to their worldly circumstances.

The outlook was encouraging. Two thousand six hundred communicants were enrolled on parish and missionary registers. The annual confirmations averaged three hundred and fifty. At Selma alone, with a communicant list of barely more than one hundred, fifty-six persons were confirmed in a single year. Three thousand five hundred dollars was given for diocesan missions. The churches at Montgomery, Mobile, Huntsville, Selma, Tuscaloosa, Union Springs, Greenville, Livingston, Eutaw, and Seale felt so comfortable financially that they voluntarily increased their assessments so that the Bishop's salary might be increased from four thousand to four thousand five hundred dollars.\* It was now, when every

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\* Some conception of prevalent financial conditions can be formed from knowledge of the assessments then levied (and

one had a mind to work, and when the whole diocesan edifice was progressing most favorably, that the panic of 1873 came, disorganizing all diocesan and parochial undertakings, crippling the larger congregations, and well-nigh threatening extinction to the missionary operations.

The first blow came in the reduction by the Domestic Board of Missions of its allowance to Alabama. A few years previously the Board's appropriation had been three thousand dollars. After one year this had been reduced to eighteen hundred dollars. And now a further reduction was made to one thousand dollars. This action was taken two years before the storm burst and was consequent upon the first turn of the thumb-screw.

At the same time missionary offerings within the diocese showed a sharp decline, the decline in a single year being one thousand dollars. This decrease was due in part to the general stringency, but chiefly to local demands for church buildings and other parochial enterprises which the largest contributors to diocesan missions—Mobile, Montgomery, Selma, and Huntsville—had begun and were forced to complete.

The third blow was consequent upon the first two. Within a twelve-month the net decrease in the clerical force, which had largely recovered from the immediately post-bellum depletion, was six, and many church doors throughout the diocese were not opened

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paid). The largest were: Montgomery (St. John's) \$1,000; Mobile (Christ Church) \$880; Mobile (Trinity) \$605; Huntsville \$550; Selma \$500; Mobile (St. John's) \$300.

for months. Miss Catherine Wolfe, of New York, did much to relieve the ecclesiastical distress all over the country ; in Alabama alone she eased the situation materially by a gift of two thousand dollars. The missionaries had for a short period before this been receiving a minimum stipend of one thousand dollars, but now their uncertain incomes were but a fraction of this amount, and what they received came irregularly. Those that were temporally and spiritually able remained at their posts ; some because they could not better their condition by moving away, most because they were not hirelings.

The passing of the crest in 1873 was the beginning of a time of long and anxious watching and waiting. Every financial and industrial collapse is followed by social and individual restlessness. New fields are tried by those who, not anchored by sheer inability to move, feel that they are at the storm center and that conditions elsewhere are surely more favorable. It was so in Alabama. The restlessness engendered by the Civil War had not passed when this new occasion brought on a more extensive running-to-and-fro than ever before. The ecclesiastical and spiritual injury would have been serious enough had these removals been only from place to place within the state. But unfortunately for Alabama it was at this time that hope was looking towards the setting sun and the stream of Western immigration was flowing level with its banks. Five thousand souls had been confirmed in the thirteen years of Bishop Wilmer's episcopate, yet scarcely more than three thousand communicants

remained in the diocese. The whole state was suffering from depletion of population. Its mineral wealth was almost untouched. Its vast timber resources were undeveloped. Its manufactories were in the womb of time. Its strength lay in its cultivated fields. And its fields were wearing out under the negligent husbandry of white owner and black tenant. In not a few portions of the state the original forest was beginning to encroach upon the once cultivated fields and to resume its primeval sway—parabolic of the condition of the Church.

Patiently and hopefully had Bishop Wilmer worked, thus far, but when in 1874 the Board of Missions reduced its apportionment to Alabama from one thousand dollars to a sum too insignificant to be mentioned, he gave measured expression to the indignation that such folly, whether partisan or but short-sighted, aroused within him: "In the midst of our peculiar depression I had indulged the hope that the General Missionary Board would come to the aid of the Church in the Southern Dioceses. It would have been a reasonable hope. We might have been pardoned for supposing that the wise admonition of the Apostle would have been heeded—'As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them which are of the household of faith.' I wish to say no word in disparagement of any effort that looks to the weal of any class of men. I recognize fully the claims of the barbarian. But it strikes me that, for every reason, it is the wise policy and stern duty of the Church to abandon no position that has been already

gained, and to lose no ground that has been once occupied. If the Church in this country is to play the important part in the evangelization of the world that she is fitted for, then she is but poorly preparing herself for the mighty work in hand by allowing large areas of territory, now occupied by Anglo-Saxon people, to lie neglected, and (which is sadder still) to permit churches already established to perish for want of aid during a period of peculiar distress and impoverishment."

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE REVOLUTION OF BOOM TIMES.

THE low-water record of diocesan life was made in 1875. In the following year improvement began; for ten years it was constant; at no time was it remarkable. It was a decade of strong heart-throb and steady pulse-beat, of dawning consciousness of power and increasing determination to do and dare for Christ and His Kingdom.

It was a period of rooting and transplanting. Growth along the Selma, Rome & Dalton Railroad from Selma to Cross Plains\* was especially notable. In the Tennessee Valley the prospect became less discouraging. In the Gulf Coast missions results were at last perceptible. In the Black Belt almost every available point was occupied that had not long ago been tried and dropped.

In the Mineral Region alone there was, at first, no progress, and no apparent hope of progress. A single parish, the Church of the Advent, had been organized at Birmingham, two miles northeast of Elyton, as early as 1872;† it was first served by an eloquent preacher and faithful pastor, the Rev. Philip A.

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\* Now Piedmont.

† At this time Elyton had a population of 700 souls, and was the county seat. Birmingham had been incorporated the preceding year, the first house having been built August 29, 1871, and was already a town of 2,000 inhabitants.



Fitts, who had abandoned a successful career at the bar that he might bear witness of the truth; but its growth was slow, and nine years elapsed before another congregation was organized in that region.

Church extension in the Mineral Region began with the founding of Grace Church, Anniston, in 1881. This Church was one of the first fruits of the rapidly approaching Boom Times. Birmingham had already heralded forth her mineral wealth and industrial possibilities, and people were already coming in, a few from the country at large, the majority from the agricultural regions and commercial centers of our own state. What the Elyton Land Company was to Birmingham, that the Woodstock Iron Company was to Anniston. Each company developed its own city, but better preparation was made in Anniston than in Birmingham for the expected population. Before the city was thrown open to the world by the customary auction day of building lots, which is the birthday of all premeditated booms, the streets were macadamized and lighted, water mains were laid, and a sewerage system was completed. Chief among the promoters were the Nobles and Tylers, staunch and zealous Churchmen. These and a few others living in Anniston had been receiving regular ministrations from the Rev. J. F. Smith as far back as 1875, but no parochial organization had been attempted, and later on the services were intermittent; but now these persons, out of the wealth already coming to them, built at a cost of thirty thousand dollars a chaste and beautiful Gothic structure of gray stone, with inside furnish-

ings of cedar and brass. The only defect of this church was its diminutiveness. The seating capacity was only two hundred and fifty, and was monopolized by the wealthier parishioners. There was no room for the poor. This defect was in part met by the erection at Glen Addie of a chapel for the poor; unfortunately many of the poor lived elsewhere. The result was that Grace Church never became a large parish, and that its work among the poorest has been comparatively unimportant.

Meanwhile the Church of the Advent, Birmingham, working in and from a small frame building intended for a village congregation, was growing rapidly. In two years it doubled in size, and year by year its development registered the growth of the city. Birmingham was leaving Anniston behind. They who were making haste to become rich cared more for opportunities than for improvements. Anniston gave the latter, Birmingham the former. Anniston had iron ore in abundance, and fully equal in quality to that of Birmingham; but Birmingham had what Anniston did not have—coal; and this one consideration turned the main current of immigration into the Birmingham district, leaving but a modicum for Anniston.

The speculative fever, the boom-specter that will not down, was soon rising, and as its opportunity was greatest in the vicinity of Birmingham so there it reached a higher temperature than elsewhere. It was not long ere metropolitan prices were paid per front foot. Every corner lot was a gold-mine. It mattered

not that the frontage was on the primeval forest, and that the sanguine purchaser who dallied after night-fall upon his newly acquired property experienced no small difficulty in finding his way out of the woods and back to inhabited avenues and streets. If there were no houses in the neighborhood, that was only because purchasers found it more profitable to sell unimproved property on a rising market; the houses would come when the lots could remain in one man's hands long enough for the mason and the carpenter, whose operations were slower than those of aerial builders. If there was no rapid transit, that was not needed yet; it would come as soon as the street began to build up; meanwhile dotted lines served at public auction and private sale to show the projected railway and street car systems.

It was an exciting game, that of trying who could blow the bubble largest; and while it lasted fortunes were made, invested in other speculative enterprises—and ultimately lost. A single lot would often change hands a half-score times between day-dawn and midnight, every purchaser selling it at a profit, and the same speculator buying and selling it more than once. It is easily seen that each inflation was a greater strain upon the existence of the bubble, increasing its tenuity, and bringing the day of bursting a step nearer. Generally part payment was made for each purchase, and notes were given for the balance due. Thus was formed an ever growing chain of debtor-creditors, the failure of any one of whom to meet his obligations would be disastrous to all, and the danger of the ina-

bility of some one increasing with every transaction.

However, the time of settlement was not yet at hand. The fever spread throughout Alabama, ensuring a long procession of men bringing with them more breath, more lung power, and more bubble-mixture. After a little these newcomers were starting new bubbles of their own in the vicinity of the center of activity. No pent-up Birmingham could contract their powers. Thus Woodlawn and Avondale, and, on a larger scale, Bessemer, were created. Bessemer, indeed, would fain have been the compeer of Birmingham, but in her adventurous ambition succeeded only in giving new point to the ancient fable of the frog and the ox. In all these places Churchmen were found and congregations established. The Rev. Thomas J. Beard, who had become rector of the Church of the Advent, Birmingham, and the Rev. J. A. Van Hoose, a deacon whose injured eyesight had prevented him from pressing on to Priest's Orders, and who had become a prosperous business man, labored independently and indefatigably to meet the demands of the new-born conditions. In Birmingham alone from fifty to one hundred and fifty new communicants were enrolled annually; how many came and went without making themselves known cannot be estimated.

By 1887 the parish of the Advent numbered eleven hundred souls. Many of the congregation had removed to the South Highlands, and a new parish was a manifest necessity. At first the Rev. Mr. Beard retained charge of his old parishioners in the new parish

of St. Mary's, but soon a neat frame building was erected and a rector was in charge—the Rev. L. W. Rose. A few years later this church was burned, Mr. Rose went back to Virginia, a stone church was built on the plan of the former structure but on a better site, and the Rev. Owen P. Fitzsimmons, recently a Presbyterian minister, became rector. The congregation increased rapidly, its greatest growth being due to removals of the wealthier members of the Advent to the church which was nearest their new mansions on the Highlands. The parish church of the Advent was woefully inadequate to its needs, not more than two hundred persons being able to gain admission at the public services. A subscription paper was circulated, and enough money was raised, on paper, to build the present costly edifice. The cash, however, was not forthcoming, and when the church was finally completed (which was not until 1894) it was struggling under a mortgage debt of twenty-three thousand dollars.

Not merely in the immediate vicinity of Birmingham and Anniston but all through the hill country of Alabama prospectors and developers were at work, and workmen and speculators were multiplying. To catalogue these places would be foreign to the purpose of this record. Suffice it to say that to greater or less extent all of them demanded the ministrations of the Church. Whether the new comers were Alabamians or aliens, as Churchmen they had right to expect nurture from the Church in Alabama. Where, but a few years earlier, a single missionary with his headquar-

ters at Talladega, fifty miles away, sufficed for the score of communicants in this district, and found a horse and gig a sufficiently rapid means of locomotion, now ten clergymen were unequal to the demands and opportunities. Avondale, Bessemer, Blocton, Blossburg, Bridgeport, Coalburg, Fort Payne, Pratt City, and Woodlawn were a few of the new congregations. Twenty new parishes and missions were established in five years (1885-1890), and in the same length of time the missionary force increased from seven to thirteen.

The social and industrial revolution wrought by the development of the Mineral Regions had thus its counterpart in the congestion of the body ecclesiastical. There was engorgement of the large arteries, and the chill of death at the extremities.\* The drain on the rural and village congregations was unprecedented. In five years Greensboro, Tuscaloosa, and Uniontown lost one-third of their communicants; Union Springs lost two-thirds of hers; Livingston was almost obliterated, losing more communicants than were enrolled in 1885. Of the larger non-boom places Selma lost nearly, and Montgomery more than, one hundred communicants, and Mobile more than two hundred. Hundreds of those who remained in their old homes brought themselves to sore straits to get money for "investment" in "good bargains" and "sure things." Joint stock concerns bought up old fields in all possible and impossible locations, and received

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\* See Bishop Wilmer's Council Address for 1887.



for shares much of the money that had been going into the parochial and missionary treasuries.

Had the removal of the fortune-seekers been merely a transfer of strength to newly-formed congregations the upheaval might have been of immediate, positive benefit to the diocese. But with comparatively few exceptions the removal of a communicant into the boom district was a distinct loss of financial strength to the diocese, of personal service to the parish, and of true religion to the pilgrim. The men that made haste to be rich fell into divers temptations, and the glamour of gold concealed the evil of lowered standards. They invested all their cash, and frequently discounted their incomes for months and years, in getting "a good start," and after paying their household, office, and personal expenses, had but little left with which to pay their spiritual taxes. With the bursting of the bubble disappeared their capital, their employment, and their income.

But they, and the congregations that they formed, did not disappear. Not one of the newly formed parishes and missions was annihilated. The wave that brought them there left them there. During the boom they had needed aid; after its collapse their need increased. Their formation into parishes had been effected with meteoric rapidity; their financial impoverishment followed with even greater celerity. Three years after its organization Trinity Church, Bessemer, was paying its rector a salary of twelve hundred dollars; two years later it was conjoined with

Avondale and Woodlawn, and was paying only two hundred dollars toward the missionary's support.

The old established congregations, with reduced numerical and financial strength, had not only to bear their own burdens, but also to help bear the burdens of the new weaklings. And right nobly did they rise to their new responsibility. When the boom began only twenty-two congregations in the diocese were helping the weaker congregations, and these gave only eighteen hundred dollars. When the boom collapsed thirty-three congregations were contributing thirty-five hundred dollars a year to the work. It is worthy of remark that with the exception of what was given by the Church of the Advent, Birmingham, and Grace Church, Anniston, every cent of this came from the congregations outside the boom districts.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE DIOCESAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

“THE difficulty of raising such small sums as we are speaking of—a few thousand dollars for mission and parish work—is not so much in the hardness of the times as in the want of system. We Southern people are proverbially unsystematic. There are peoples with half our resources who accomplish double results. Practically, a very few of the people do the work of the Church ; and it falls heavily and unequally upon the few. The great majority of our people stand aloof from active co-operation, and, I am satisfied, not entirely from want of interest, but from the absence of a well-digested plan, by which each one shall be pledged to do regularly and systematically what he can afford to do.”

Bishop Wilmer was very urgent when he wrote these words in 1873. The general and increasing financial stringency of the last few years had aroused murmuring and restlessness in many parishes. Some had complained outright that the assessment laid upon them for “Conventional expenses”—which were chiefly the Bishop’s salary—was unbearable. Others had indirectly made the same complaint in their plea for “a more equitable adjustment” of assessments. Many had thought it hard that, with their limited resources, they should, after contributing liberally toward the Bishop’s salary, be continually exhorted to

give as liberally to aid the missionary work. This feeling was not quieted by the Convention's unpremeditated and impulsive increase of the Bishop's salary, in a year of so great distress, to \$4,500.\* With the diocesan assessment now twice as great as the amount contributed towards the support of the entire missionary staff, it was inevitable that individual parishes would understand the Convention to say, in effect: "We have placed a positive obligation upon you, and you must meet it. Your contribution to missionary operations is a voluntary contribution. We desire that you give to that cause as liberally as you can; but before all else you must pay your debt to the Bishop." Likewise it was inevitable that, with a given amount raisable in each parish and with exclusion from the Convention as penalty for non-payment of the diocesan assessment, the parishes would pay their assessments and let the missionary work remain a stunted growth.

What ought to have been done was one thing; what was done was another. For years the Bishop and others had been publishing tables of figures to prove that it was the easiest thing in the world for the diocese to raise from twenty to fifty thousand dollars a year for Conventional and Missionary purposes. "A dime

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\* The Bishop's salary remained at \$4,500 until 1879 when, at the Bishop's request it was reduced to \$4,000. A still further reduction, with the same initiative, was made in 1892, when it was demonstrated after a year's trial that Alabama was unable to pay \$7,000 a year for Episcopal service. Each Bishop has since then received a salary of \$3,000.

a week from every communicant''—so ran the formula. But the communicants did not consist of wheat only. In neither diocesan nor parochial churches will the time ever come when every communicant will give a dime a week, or any other sum regularly, to the support and extension of the Kingdom of God.

Yet the Bishop's contention that many stood aloof from financial co-operation in Church work because of lack of system in the doing of Church work was, in the main, correct. The missionary operations of the diocese had come to that point where well-digested, thoroughly worked system was essential to further development. He that sets ten men to work does better than he that does the work of ten men. He that sets ten men to give does better than he that gives as much as ten men. These were, in effect, the principles on which Bishop Wilmer was working. He had set forth his ideas as soon as the subsiding ground swell from the Civil War allowed the consideration of aggressive work to come to the front. He had made many suggestions to the more prominent Churchmen as they gathered to the Conventions from year to year, and the clearness of his views and the force with which he expressed them stirred Convention after Convention to interest, enthusiasm, and the passing of earnest resolutions. But when the Convention adjourned, and they returned home to confront the same old parochial trials and discouragements which had for a time passed from memory, the temperature of these good men fell very rapidly—a phenomenon not unknown in more recent days. For example:

In 1869 the Convention resolved to give the offering on the second Sunday in every month to diocesan missions; and then the clergy went home and, to a man, forgot all about the resolution. The next year at Convention much compunction was manifested and it was determined to do better; but at the end of the next six months one solitary parish had given as much as one cent—and this despite the fact that the burden of supporting the eight missionaries was borne by the Bishop alone. Small wonder is it, then, that in 1872 the Bishop very nearly rose in insurrection, and told the Convention plainly that he would no longer bear the Convention's own responsibility for support of the missionaries unless the brethren gave him, not words of approbation, but tangible evidence of determination to help. He demanded some system; he left the Convention free to choose its own plan.

Sufficient pressure to cause movement having been applied, the Convention of 1872 gave Alabama its first attempt at systematizing the missionary work. The plan adopted was that presented by the Rev. Dr. Horace Stringfellow, Jr., a recent accession to the ranks of the diocesan clergy. It was extremely simple: To leave standing the old order for monthly offerings and to supplement these offerings by the pledge of a minimum sum from each congregation. The clergy and their lay delegates made pledges, and went home and kept them. The amount raised in the ensuing year was more than three thousand dollars.

But it was in 1873 that the present system, which was allowed to sleep fourteen years before it was



aroused and put to work, saw the light. The Bishop had just made a strong plea for system to replace spasms. He had received enough money, in consequence of his appeal of the previous year, to keep open the churches at Jacksonville, Talladega, Montevallo, Union Springs, Seale, Carlowville, Tilden, Opelika, Marion, Greenville, Evergreen, and Whistler; but he was unable to assist the congregations at Livingston, Pushmataha, Autaugaville, Gadsden and the smaller places in the Tennessee Valley. The Bishop's appeal was grounded on the thought that if the diocese was truly one body, each part must minister to the others. "In theory," he said, "we realize our mutual membership, one in the other, and our common membership in Christ. When we realize this in heart and deed, then the abundance of one will ever flow to the relief of another; the strong will reach its hand to help the weak; and, when charity becomes more perfect, will extend itself as unconsciously as one hand helps another in doing a work which one cannot do alone. In a word, we shall reproduce the Pentecostal spirit, and no man shall think that to be his own which a brother needs more than himself."

There sat in this Convention a layman who, because of his reputation as a remarkably painstaking, methodical, successful, trustworthy banker, was at this, the second, Convention he had attended in the novitiate of his Churchmanship, elected Treasurer of the diocese—Mr. James H. Fitts, of Tuscaloosa. Mr. Fitts was appointed a member of the special committee to which were referred the Bishop's observations on

missionary work. The Rev. R. A. Cobbs was chairman of this committee, and, as chairman, his duty was to write the committee's report. But in the preliminary consultation of the committee Mr. Fitts suggested a plan so simple, yet so thorough and workable, that the chairman and the entire committee requested him not only to formulate it, but to present it to the Convention as the committee's report. Like Columbus' method of setting an egg on end, it was alphabetical in simplicity; only—no one had thought of it before.

First of all, the committee expressly condemned the existing plan of securing pledges from *parishes* as wrong in principle and unsatisfactory in results. In lieu thereof it recommended:

*1st*, That it should be the duty of each clergyman to obtain from every communicant in his congregation a written pledge to pay a specific amount weekly for missions; this pledge to be given and redeemed through the Offertory, and thus formally consecrated to God;

*2nd*, That it should be the duty of each clergyman to appoint collectors of the pledges not redeemed by the end of each month;

*3rd*, That it should be the duty of each clergyman to transmit the receipts every month to the Treasurer of the Diocesan Missionary Fund;

*4th*, That it should be the duty of the Treasurer of the Diocesan Missionary Fund to send a quarterly report of his receipts and disbursements to every clergyman in the diocese; and,

5th, That it should be the duty of the clergy to read these reports to their congregations.

These recommendations aroused the liveliest interest and discussion. Some of the clergy were very jealous for the dignity of their order, and these unlimbered on the phraseology of the report. They decidedly objected to having laymen dictate to them their "duty;" especially when that duty was proclaimed to be the collecting of money in small amounts. They contended that the clergy were insulted by the attempt to make them the financial agents of an organization. The Rev. Dr. John Fulton very emphatically assured the Convention that, as for himself, he "would not pick picayunes" in Christ Church, Mobile. Some one suggested, in the interest of peace and harmony, that for the antagonizing phrase "It shall be the duty," should be substituted the less forcible, but more euphemistic, words, "It is recommended." But the committee stood by their guns. They thought they had properly located the responsibility, and they purposed to fix it where it belonged. The opposition slept over the matter. After a good night's rest the committee's report did not seem so dreadful; besides, there was no penalty for disregard of the Convention's action. So in quieter mood they went up to the Church (Trinity Church, Mobile) that morning and made no opposition to the unanimous adoption of the plan and its verbiage, exactly as proposed.

So the Convention declared what was the duty of the clergy in the matter. The clergy by their own vote

confessed to a sense of their duty. The records show that they went back home and were as unanimously inactive as they had been enactive. Not a single clergyman in Alabama did his self-confessed duty. A few, indeed, did put the Fitts plan into operation; but these applied it strictly to parochial purposes!\*

The Bishop was in despair. For years he had urged system and at last the clergy seemed to declare that they would not have system. "I will not press this matter further," was the Bishop's heart-sick conclusion. "I have, perhaps, in the judgment of some, been already too importunate. If they think so, they must forgive me for my cause."

So, systemless as to missionary finance, spasmodically enthusiastic, and with income diminishing year by year, surely and constantly, until in 1883 the amount contributed was less than one thousand dollars, the Church in Alabama allowed her missionary work to disintegrate and her missionary force to slip from her nerveless grasp. One by one the clergy of the dependent congregations were dismissed to other dioceses, and were scattered to the four winds. They went to Tennessee, Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky, Indiana, Kansas, Texas—wherever, in fact, there lived those who deemed the laborer worthy of his hire. They were frozen out, these men. Like the mercury shrinking before a cold-wave the missionary receipts fell from two thousand dollars to seventeen hundred, and then dropped rapidly to fifteen, to fourteen, to eleven, and finally (1883) rested at nine

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\* See Journal of 1874, page 42.

hundred; while the missionaries themselves decreased from twelve to ten, to seven, and finally to six.

Through these ten years the Bishop remembered his words of former days, and resolutely refrained from importuning the diocese for "system." Once only did he refer, and then only incidentally, to this work. In 1878 he complained of the "utter want of all system" in every branch of ecclesiastical endeavor, and suggested that the clergy and laity should be associated with himself in the missionary work. Thereupon the Convention, following its old custom, referred the suggestion to a special committee; the committee reported back a slight variation of the Fitts plan, the distinctive feature being the provision for an advisory committee of clergymen and laymen whom the Bishop could at his pleasure call into consultation. The Convention received the special committee's report, and referred it to the Committee on Canons to be shaped into a canon. This committee dawdled, and the plan was soon with the silent majority.

So far the decade had been marked by disintegration, decay, and discouragement. The first positive step towards the rehabilitation of the missionary work was taken in 1884. The old Convocational system had not, as we have seen, amounted to much, but now it was rubbed up a bit and found to have kept ready a number of "Deans." As these deans were already nominally supervising missionary operations in their respective Convocations, what could be more natural, in integrating Church extension work, than to put them in the Bishop's missionary cabinet?

What could be more natural than to add from each Convocation a layman, and thus bring representative clergymen and laymen from various parts of the diocese to feel a common interest in the entire work? The men that formulated this idea were the Rev. Drs. Joseph L. Tucker and Horace Stringfellow, the Rev. Messrs. J. C. Taylor and H. K. Rees, and Messrs. N. H. R. Dawson, David Buell, and Charles E. Waller. The resolutions presented by these men as a committee went through without a dissenting voice, and the Convention followed up its action by at once placing on the "Board of Missions" men whose chief recommendation was not that they were figure-heads. The Bishop, of course, was President of the Board. The deans—the Rev. Messrs. H. K. Rees, Horace Stringfellow, D. D., R. H. Cobbs, D. D., T. J. Beard, and J. M. Banister, D. D.,—were ex-officio the clerical members. The lay-members elected were: J. H. Fitts, of Tuskaloosa; R. E. Coxe, of Huntsville; James Bond, of Mobile; Charles L. Stickney, of Greensboro; and David Buell, of Greenville.

The creation of this Board of Missions and the admission of laymen to a share of official responsibility was attended with immediate and marked improvement in the treasury and in the field of missions. Not only was the long and steady decline in receipts checked, but a sharp upward turn was given them, and in the following year they amounted to more than in any of the ten preceding years. The Bishop was enabled to put four new missionaries in the field at once, and to re-occupy the long vacant fields of



Whistler, Citronelle, Grand Bay, and Bon Secour ; Livingston ; Burton's Hill (Fork of Greene) and Gainesville ; and Eufaula and Clayton. The diocese in next year's Convention assembled felicitated itself upon this improvement. Having done so much better than had been expected it proceeded for the next two or three years to do much worse than was to be expected. Enough was raised to support the four new missionaries, but a number of congregations in North and Middle Alabama were still shepherdless and the missionary board was forced to play the horse-leech.

It was not simply for salaries that money was needed; though in later days the overwhelming necessity to meet this demand has seemed to make the pay-roll the only legitimate channel of expenditure. Missionaries, whose families were not infrequently of more than moderate size, needed assistance to pay their railroad fare into the diocese. One hundred dollars was appropriated towards the building of every new mission church or chapel. Sudden and exceptional cases demanded immediate help. To meet all these extraordinary calls the Bishop appealed for one hundred communicants to give him ten dollars each per annum. Parishioners of Christ Church, Mobile, gave nearly one-fourth of what he desired. Every lay-member of the Board of Missions responded to the appeal. In all the remainder of the diocese only one person gave anything.

It is possible, now, in the light of subsequent events, to diagnose the missionary condition: The laity of Alabama had never been properly approached in

behalf of diocesan missions. The thigh of fervent appeals, of exhortations to duty and denunciations of judgment for negligence, is not as large as the little finger of detailed and correlated statements of facts, and illustrations of present conditions and future possibilities. It is a moderate estimate that two-thirds of the Churchmen of Alabama never heard of a single one of the Convention's many missionary resolutions, and that ninety-nine one-hundredths were totally ignorant of the status of missionary work in the diocese. Furthermore, it is safe to say that, under the conditions, wider information was impossible. What knowledge the clergy themselves had was ill-digested, and the clerical mind is so constituted that it has a tendency, often irresistible, to exhort before it has laid a solid foundation for exhortation. What the Church needed was a layman accustomed to dealing with facts, able to grasp them in detail and to arrange them in symmetrical proportion, desirous to study the conditions, and prepared to make them known to the congregations of the diocese. An organizer was wanted, an organizer that could speak and work with the authority of the Council behind him. Could such a man be found?

Charles E. Waller, a young lawyer of Greensboro, was the man to whom the Council turned as by divine guidance. For ten years Mr. Waller had been coming to Convention. For three years he had sat on the Board of Missions. In Convention and in Board he had often been heard in debate. From the first he was interested in the missionary problem. The earnest-

ness with which he put forward his views on this subject had marked him out as pre-eminently the man to push forward the organization of missionary finances. He was accordingly elected Treasurer.\* His first duty as Treasurer was to relieve the Bishop of the responsibility of being the Board's financial agent. He threw himself into this new work with all his customary enthusiasm. He deemed the Fitts plan the best plan, and undertook to vitalize it. He spent much time in visiting all the larger parishes, and many of the smaller. Everywhere the clergy welcomed him cordially. He addressed the congregations from the chancel floor on Sunday, and followed up the good impression thus made by the immediate organization in most of the parishes of branches of the Missionary Society. St. John's, Montgomery, was the only parish whose rector refused point blank to allow the formation of the society within its borders,† but Dr. Stringfellow saw to it that no other parish exceeded his in the amount of its yearly contributions to missions. Everywhere the money began to flow in for the work. The boom, while depleting, had stirred, and the system moved off into new fields with the mighty momentum gained by the increase of receipts in a single year from seventeen hundred to three thousand five hundred dollars.

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\* All previous Treasurers of the Missionary Fund had lived in Mobile. Only four men had served in the entire forty-two years--Thomas W. McCoy, Joseph W. Field, Stephens Croom, and Robert Middleton.

† Dr. Stringfellow never allowed any societies to be organized in St. John's parish.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE GOLDEN AGE.

THE life of a community and that of a commonwealth are alike in this: that long continued quietude brings mental stagnation and that unexpected upheavals, threatening destruction of past labors, arouse latent energy and lead to fuller life and development.

The life of a parish and that of a diocese are subject to similar conditions. The burning of a church is often the salvation of a parish. The economic perturbation of a state is often the opportunity for diocesan progress.

So it was in Alabama in the 'Eighties, and so it came about that the years when the Boom shook the agricultural and well-established town and city congregations to the center, and shook the very life out of some of them, were the years when the general condition of the diocese was, and was becoming, the most satisfactory. The years 1884-1891 may properly be termed the "Golden Age" of the Church in Alabama. The labors of the diocese were more abundant in these years, and the harvest was greater, than in any other period of the same length in the history of the diocese.

1. The earliest noticeable improvement came in the easier flow of money into the diocesan, parochial, and missionary treasuries. The loosing of purse-strings had first been for speculation in the mineral regions.

Bank deposits with cobwebs over them were brought out, and dusted, and pressed into active service. Men began to speak familiarly of amounts that previously had been mentioned with some reverence. For very shame at the contrast between their week-day expenditures and those of Sunday they pocketed the five-cent piece which habit had unconsciously separated from larger coin, and enriched the alms-basin with twenty-five cents. Twenty-five cents a month to diocesan missions began to seem parsimonious, and a fifty-cent pledge was given. A yearly subscription of twenty dollars to the rector's salary was raised to fifty dollars. The ministerial salaries were increased from ten to fifty per cent. Parochial debts were paid, improvements were made in church buildings and rectories, and goodly sums were gathered in trust for further development. The missionary income, under zealous administration of the new system, remained more than three thousand dollars. Diocesan assessments were met promptly, and payment of the Bishop's salary was never carried into another fiscal year.

2. Resulting from this favorable financial condition, wherein a diocese of five thousand communicants raised \$125,000 in the single year 1889-90, was the second improvement, viz., the increase in the number of clergy. The missionary force grew from seven to thirteen, and the active clergy from twenty-two to thirty-four. Not the least encouraging feature of this increase was that it was largely indigenous, giving promise (not always fulfilled) of a permanent ministry of Alabamians wedded to their own people.

3. The infusion of all this new blood, by grafting and by ordination, aroused a godly emulation in the body clerical. In a single year (1888) the rector of St. John's, Mobile, made eleven hundred visits, baptized more than one hundred persons, preached one hundred and thirty-six sermons, and presented for Confirmation in the parish one hundred and twenty-three persons. Others worked no less indefatigably as their fields permitted. The missionaries did not preach so frequently as the city clergy, or baptize and visit so many, or present as large numbers for Confirmation, but their diligence was not one whit less. Sometimes, though, they were permitted to waste a large amount of energy. For example: One minister was stationed at Auburn. Seven miles from Auburn was Opelika. The two places, each with less than thirty communicants, were served by different clergymen, neither of whom had any other charge. The Auburn minister resided in his mission. The minister who served Opelika lived first in Montgomery and afterwards at Decatur, Georgia. From the former place he traveled one hundred and thirty-two miles on each visit to Opelika, and from the latter two hundred and forty. When he lived in Montgomery each visit carried him through Auburn, and when he lived in Decatur he passed through Atlanta and three or four Georgia mission stations served by a minister who lived within *three miles* of Opelika.\*

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\* The explanation of this remarkable condition is that Emmanuel Church, Opelika, was a "parish," and called its own minister. This particular minister, having independent



4. The unexampled energy of the laity in personal work was one of the most encouraging features of this period. This manifested itself in two distinct lines—the growth of parochial societies and guilds, and the increase of lay-readers. The parochial societies were for the greater part expression of women's energy; they were engrossed with the raising of funds for parish improvements and the preparation of boxes for missionaries. The societies and their membership quadrupled in number in five years. Lay-readers had first appeared in Alabama, so far as can be ascertained from memory and records, in 1861, St. Paul's Church, Greensboro, being kept open by lay-service during the interval of six months between the removal of the Rev. Mr. Banister and the arrival of the Rev. Mr. Cobbs. They had done service again, at Marion and Uniontown, in 1865; but for years their numbers had been small and their duties nominal, their chief sphere of action being to read the prayers and lessons for the minister. In rare instances they had been known to do missionary work, and not infrequently they had, as at Greensboro, kept the church doors open between rectorships; but their availability did not develop fully until about 1880, when the necessity lay upon the Bishop, and was recognized by the laity, of extemporizing an unordained and unsalaried diaconate to

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means, was satisfied to serve the parish for less than his traveling expenses. After his death Opelika's independence ceased, and that congregation and the congregation at Auburn were conjoined, and served by a minister receiving aid from the Board of Missions.

meet the exigencies of diocesan development. From this time forward men of ability offered themselves or were sought out by their minister. The Bishop, reposing in this new force a confidence that they never betrayed, added to their commission as lay-readers, in some instances "power to exhort"—a faculty differing from that of preaching by less than any appreciable distinction. The majority of the lay-readers did good service at the smaller places—Uniontown, Faunsdale, Eutaw, Prattville, Troy, Geneva, Columbia, and the like. Of the larger parishes only Christ Church, Mobile, seemed to realize the vast reserve of lay-energy only waiting to be evoked to evangelize the whole surrounding country.

5. The number of confirmations steadily increased, until in 1889 more than five hundred persons received the Laying-on-of-Hands. Less than half as many were confirmed in the following year, the Bishop's illness allowing but few visitations.

6. The general spirit of hopefulness gave men the courage to try greater things and the ability to accomplish them. At one time six churches were awaiting consecration, having been built and completed almost simultaneously without debt. "Divide and overcome" became the cry in three cities that had each been content with one congregation, and soon the Holy Comforter, Montgomery; St. Mary's, Birmingham; and St. Michael and All Angels', Anniston, were living, growing parishes. The last-named parish was due to the gift by Mr. John W. Noble, of Anniston, of a magnificent pile of buildings consisting of

church, chapel, parish house, and rectory, built of stone, after the Norman order of architecture, at a cost of more than one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. It was established for the benefit of the poorer classes, but the anticipated increase of population was checked, just as the church was completed, by the collapse of values throughout the mineral regions, and St. Michael's has apparently yet many years to wait before it enters upon its destiny. About the time of the completion of St. Michael and All Angels' Church, Mr. Josiah Morris gave a ten thousand dollar chapel to St. John's, Montgomery, while Christ Church, Mobile, was enabled by the hard work of the women, assisted by the munificence of Mr. H. A. Schroeder, to whom the parish already owed its rectory, to build a thoroughly modern parish-house costing ten thousand dollars. A chapel costing the same amount was given to the Church of the Nativity, Huntsville, by Mrs. Wilson Bibb, as a memorial of her husband and little daughter.

Such were some of the more encouraging features of the diocesan life in the later 'Eighties.

On March 15, 1888, Bishop Wilmer issued a circular letter announcing that on account of his failing health and increasing inability to give the necessary oversight to the missionary work he would ask the Council at its approaching session to elect an Assistant Bishop. The Bishop issued this letter without sounding public opinion, but public opinion was not slow in declaring itself. The proposition met with all but unanimous opposition, both by clergy and by laity.

They had not expected such a proposition, and the time was too short for them to come to a well-balanced decision. Moreover, Assistant Bishops were not as plentiful as Coadjutors are today. All that was known of the working of a double Episcopate was derived from the custom in Virginia of always having an Assistant ; and the clergy were afraid of the possibilities. When, therefore, the Council convened, the Bishop withdrew his notification.

Though the Churchmen of Alabama were unwilling to elect an Assistant Bishop they were desirous to give the Bishop all possible non-episcopal assistance in his work. Accordingly, the Council of 1888 proceeded to create an office to which the Board of Missions should give the title. The Board called the officer "Archdeacon," and the Council elected as first (and, so far (1898), only) Archdeacon of the diocese the Rev. Horace Stringfellow, D. D. The duty of the Archdeacon was to relieve the Bishop of all detail work and to have general supervision of missionary posts.

The same Council also provided for an Evangelist, but in tying to this provision another, that two thousand dollars must be pledged specifically for the missionary's salary, over and above the regular missionary offerings, before the Evangelist should be appointed, it adopted the most effective method to kill the scheme at its birth. It is not improper to remark, in passing, that the Council has never been able to express the diocese's need for an Evangelist save in terms of two thousand dollars. It had added this

same proviso to a like resolution adopted in 1887. It re-iterated the provision in 1891, and this time rendered success more improbable than ever by postponing the appointment of the Evangelist until a salary of \$2,500 a year should be guaranteed for three years.

In fulfilling his archdiaconal functions Dr. Stringfellow visited many of the smaller congregations, when the onerous duties of his own large parish permitted, and set many things in order. The brusqueness of his manner and the positiveness of his convictions sometimes made ministers and congregations unwilling to follow his counsel, but ultimately wisdom justified her child. In some cases the Archdeacon was called upon to settle serious difficulties and misunderstandings. Among other cases he was able to secure the peaceable settlement of an unnecessary ritual squabble that had arisen in the little congregation of St. Peter's, Talladega. The minister in charge of this parish had accepted two memorial vases, and, in placing them on the re-table, had taken occasion to discuss and defend ritualistic practices and symbolism in general. He had then set up a strong defence of these vases in particular, before anyone had been offended at their presence. Thus he invited and succeeded in bringing about ritual discussion and parochial division in a congregation that had previously felt no interest in such questions, and created an abnormal apprehension of ritualism that has not been quieted to this day. Under Dr. Stringfellow's

advice the minister returned to Fond du Lac and the congregation to church.

It had been hoped by the more sanguine that with an Evangelist, an Archdeacon, and a Bishop, the supervision of missionary operations would be complete. So it would have been had the Evangelist been appointed, and the Bishop been able to visit all the places where confirmees were awaiting him. But the evangelist movement came to naught, and the Bishop was subject to more frequently recurring illness. In 1889-90 he visited, in addition to the Mobile parishes, only the congregations at Evergreen, Greenville, Hayneville, Lowndesboro, Selma, Uniontown, Faunsdale, Anniston, Jacksonville, and Talladega—fourteen in all. It was now evident to all that the well-being of the diocese demanded more Episcopal service than it was possible for Bishop Wilmer to give.

When the Council of 1890 met in St. John's chapel, Montgomery, on May 20, it was the determination of not a few to reopen the matter of electing an Assistant Bishop. Bishop Wilmer made no suggestion one way or another. At Huntsville he had said that he would not again trouble the diocese with the question, and that the initiative in any subsequent reviving of it must be taken by the Council. The Council determined to take the initiative.

Dr. Stringfellow was presiding, Bishop Wilmer, though in the city, not being able to attend all the sessions. A committee was appointed to wait on the Bishop "with a view of ascertaining from him his wishes as to any episcopal assistance in the future."



The committee was appointed only after vigorous opposition, led by Dr. Stringfellow, who deprecated any action whatever on the ground that the financial barrier was insuperable. Dr. Stringfellow himself was made chairman of the committee, and he appointed as the remaining members the Revs. J. M. Banister, D. D., and R. W. Barnwell, and Messrs. J. H. Fitts and R. M. Nelson. The committee had not been charged to express the Council's wishes; its instructions were to ascertain the Bishop's wishes. The Bishop did not purpose to recede from his position taken three years before. He had no wishes; an assistant would be necessary in the future, but none was needed imperatively now; he trusted, on his physician's authority, that his present disability was but temporary; he expected to call in a neighboring Bishop to complete the visitation of the diocese.

This was such an answer as they who knew Bishop Wilmer might have expected, but it was not an answer that satisfied the majority of the Council. At the noon recess the younger clergy and laymen, led by the Rev. J. A. Van Hoose, determined to press forward and to make known the Council's wishes to the Bishop. Immediately upon reassembling, the Council had before it a resolution that it would meet at 5 P. M. in Committee of the Whole "to consider whether, in their judgment, the time has not arrived when the health and long and faithful services of the Bishop of the diocese demand such help as love and devotion to him and to the Church press upon us to offer, and to take into consideration the election of an

Assistant Bishop." The battle over this proposition was won by its advocates after three hours of determined opposition. For another hour and a half in Committee of the Whole it was attempted to stave off the inevitable, but at 6:30 P. M. a series of resolutions was adopted declaring that the Bishop needed an assistant, and that the Council desired the Bishop's permission to proceed to the election of an Assistant Bishop, promising that the payment of a salary of three thousand dollars to the assistant should not involve any reduction in the Bishop's salary. A strongly favorable committee—the Rev. Messrs. R. W. Barnwell and Philip A. Fitts, and Mr. R. M. Nelson—communicated this action to the Bishop, who, next morning, gave his canonical consent to the election.

The Council entered upon the election that afternoon. Three clergymen were placed in nomination—the Rev. Thomas F. Gailor of Sewanee, the Rev. Robert S. Barrett of Atlanta, and the Rev. J. S. Lindsay, D. D., of Boston. These clergymen were not candidates. They did not seek the office. They were nominated by their friends without previous consultation. Their friends, however, did considerable electioneering. It cannot be doubted that Mr. Gailor would have been elected but for the apparently well-founded assertion of some who knew him that he had unalterably cast in his lot with Tennessee. The choice then fell upon Dr. Lindsay, who, though rector of St. Paul's Church, Boston, was a native Virginian. A committee was appointed to notify Dr. Lindsay of

his election. The parishes met the problem of the Assistant Bishop's support by voluntarily increasing their assessments. Then the Council adjourned. The committee on notification discharged its duty. Dr. Lindsay declined the office.

After ascertaining the further wishes of the diocese Bishop Wilmer convoked a special Council, which met in St. Paul's Church, Selma, on October 29, once more to elect an Assistant Bishop. The Rev. Mr. Barrett's friends, led by the Rev. L. W. Rose, of Birmingham, and Mr. George A. Wilkins, of Selma, again brought forward the name of Mr. Barrett. The clergy, convinced that the representations that had prevented his election at Montgomery were unfounded, nominated him to the laity by a vote of fifteen out of a total of twenty-one votes cast--the Rev. Henry Melville Jackson, D. D., of Richmond, receiving four votes, and the Rev. Philip A. H. Brown, of New York, two. When the nomination was communicated to the laity the strongest Churchmen in the diocese stood shoulder to shoulder in opposition to it. The nomination was rejected by a vote of fourteen parishes to seven.

Upon the rejection of their nomination the clergy again withdrew for consultation. The friends of Mr. Barrett urged that the name of their nominee should once more be sent in to the laity. Failing in this, they next sought, but unsuccessfully, to bring about an adjournment of the Council without nomination. Many names were informally discussed, but none present seemed to have personal acquaintance with

those whom they suggested, and at length only three were formally nominated—the Rev. R. W. Barnwell, of Selma, the Rev. Joseph Blount Cheshire, of Charlotte, N. C., and the Rev. Henry Melville Jackson, D. D., of Richmond. The nomination of Mr. Barnwell met with general approbation, and by almost unanimous vote the clergy were about to nominate him to the laity when he arose and most earnestly asserted that no earthly consideration could induce him to accept the office even though the laity should elect him. Despite this statement he came within two votes of the clerical nomination on the first ballot. As it was, repeated ballots were taken, some of the clergy firing aimlessly into the air and some using blank cartridges. Finally the clergy returned to the nave of the church for consultation with the laity. It was now far into the night, and the attempt to adjourn without action was renewed. Again it failed. Once more the clergy prepared to ballot, this time without withdrawing, and on the second ballot, taken amid the breathless excitement of a large gathering of the public, the Rev. Dr. Jackson received the clerical nomination by a majority of one vote. The laity immediately and unanimously concurred in the nomination, and Dr. Jackson was declared Assistant-Bishop-elect. The Rev. Messrs. J. L. Lancaster (who had nominated Dr. Lindsay and again had nominated Dr. Jackson), R. W. Barnwell, and Gardiner C. Tucker were appointed the committee to notify Dr. Jackson of his election.

One or two clergymen, dissatisfied with the election,

made certain representations to the Bishop-elect as to diocesan conditions, hoping that he would decline the office. Their hope was in vain, and Dr. Jackson was consecrated in St. Paul's Church, Selma, on January 21, 1891, Bishop Wilmer consecrating, Bishop Randolph (Assistant of Virginia) preaching the sermon, and Bishops Thompson of Mississippi and Peterkin of West Virginia presenting the Bishop-elect. All of these, together with Bishop Howe of South Carolina, united in the Laying-on-of-Hands.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### LOOKING BACKWARD.

THE first particular that attracts attention as we review the history of the Church in Alabama for the past generation is the apparent strangeness of diocesan development. From 1861 to 1872 the communicants were quadrupled in number, increasing from 1,683 to 6,196; the contributions were sextupled, rising from twenty thousand dollars to one hundred and twenty-five thousand; but the number of congregations had not materially changed, and the number of clergymen in the active exercise of the ministry was exactly the same. Many of the old-time clergy had passed, and younger men filled their places. Many of the country congregations had disappeared in the general movement townwards, and while new parishes appeared here and there the net increase in the whole diocese was only twelve; and that, despite the fact that, on an average, one new church was built in every year of the entire period.

We need not go far afield in search of ample explanation of this apparent combination of life and dry-rot. In these thirty years Montgomery, Selma, Birmingham, Anniston, and Huntsville, at first small towns, villages, or even without existence, became cities. Their growth was at the expense of the country and was out of all proportion to the growth of population in the state at large. As the cities



grew the city congregations increased in like proportion. As the villages and country were depopulated the rural congregations were diminished. As financial weakness came upon these little congregations some ministers were compelled to seek work elsewhere. Those that remained counteracted the reduced ability of single parishes by increasing the number of their charges. As the numbers and financial ability of the urban congregations increased new parishes were organized and additional clergy called. Thus the loss in the rural clergy was met by the gain of clergymen in the city, and the extinction of country congregations was about offset by the formation of new city parishes, while the average parish numbered many more communicants because of the increased proportion of city parishes.

Nothing more clearly shows the transition of the diocese from a rural to an urban Church than the fact that while in 1862 one-half the communicants lived in the larger towns, in 1892 two-thirds lived therein; and that while the city growth of communicants in the same length of time was four hundred per cent. (or from eight hundred to thirty-two hundred) the country growth was only fifty per cent. (or from eight hundred to twelve hundred). That is to say, the Church in Alabama has in thirty years grown four times as rapidly in the cities as in the smaller towns and the country.\*

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\* Of the sixty-six church buildings at the end of this period exactly one-half were built since 1862. These church buildings represent thirty-three new congregations, and testify

Not less remarkable than the Church's peculiar growth was its absolute freedom from theological and ecclesiastical controversy. The clergy represented every school of thought that the Church tolerates, the questions of the day gave opportunity for wide differences, and pugnacious men could have stirred up much trouble in diocesan consultations. The Cummins schism agitated the Church at large, ritual conformity was sought through hard and fast limitations, and the doctrine of Regeneration, as contained in the Office for Holy Baptism, was a battlefield wherein many doughty knights jousted and broke spears. The clergy of Alabama were interested in these matters, and approached and treated them according to individual bias. Some occasionally disputed in general Church journals with brethren of other sections. But the general temper was practical rather than speculative, and each attended to his own business—remaining steadfast in the communion of the Church, rendering the services according to the simple interpretation of unaffected dignity, baptizing the children

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to what few have sufficiently considered—that one-half the parishes and mission stations in Alabama were organized in the first thirty years of Bishop Wilmer's episcopate. The congregations organized in this period are: Athens, Anniston (3), Avondale, Auburn, Bessemer, Birmingham (2), Bon Secour, Clayton, Coalburg, Columbia, Dallas County (Grace), Decatur, Evergreen, Fowl River, Gadsden, Gainesville, Hayneville, Mount Meigs, Montevallo, Montgomery (1), Prattville, Piedmont, Sheffield, Scottsboro, Talladega, Trinity, Troy, Union Springs, Whistler, and Woodlawn. (Journal of 1892, pp. 42 and 43.)

and trusting that God gave them new birth in the water of regeneration. Parochialism, prudence, and toleration make an incombustible mixture; and these were three distinct notes of the clerical character.

But perhaps it was Bishop Wilmer's catholicity of spirit that contributed more than all other factors to this diocesan peace. The Bishop did not consider himself wiser than the Church, and did not abuse the Church's toleration, as some Bishops did, by using her catholicity for a cloak of sectarianism. He was very desirous that the General Convention should make a pronouncement upon the lawful limitations of ritual, but when the General Convention refused to enact the desired legislation he refused to declare unlawful what the national Church tolerated. He had clearly defined opinions upon many points of controversy, but he did not canonize them. He made known his opinions, but he did not urge them, or transform them into a "godly admonition," unless a congregation took offence at its minister's eccentricities of ritual or of dogma. If a clergyman avowed his disbelief in the efficacy of prayer to change atmospheric conditions, and his congregation expressed no desire in time of drought to pray for rain, in time of flood to pray for fair weather, the clergyman and his congregation were at liberty to indulge their Mohammedan fatalism to its farthest reach. If a clergyman held hazy views of Apostolic Succession, questioning whether it were essential to the being or only to the well-being of the Church, but did not, in his incertitude, invite unordained ministers to preach in his church and ad-

minister the Sacraments, no Episcopal thunder rolled, and the utmost suggestion was that the head, and not the heart, must settle a matter of which Holy Scripture and ancient authors give sufficient evidence. On the other hand, when unleavened bread was introduced it was not viewed as symbolic of Peter's Pence, but was highly commended by the Bishop, and all but universally adopted by the clergy, as being in substance the Bread of original institution and in form most suitable for a decent administration of the Lord's Supper. When, too, genuflections, candles, antiphons, Eucharistic vestments, and the like, were introduced by a few clergymen in small parishes, their innovations were left to work out their destiny in the congregation where they originated.\* It was only when fundamentals were attacked, and the teachings of Christ as recorded in Holy Scripture were explained away, that the Bishop reproved both publicly and privately, and brought about, if not a return to purer doctrine, at least a discontinuance of heterodox teaching. Zwingianism and Transubstantiation, Mariolatry and Invocation of Saints, Papal Infallibility, the doctrine of Posthumous Purgation, and that of Universalism, were unsparingly brought under the searchlight of Christ's words and impartially condemned as incompatible with Revelation.

Through the whole generation a steady, uniform im-

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\* The wisdom of this policy of non-interference is shown by the fact that except in one, and that a very weak, parish, excessive ornateness of ritual, whether doctrinal or simply æsthetic, has never survived the removal of its originator.

provement in the conduct of public services was apparent. When Bishop Wilmer came to the diocese some of the clergy, overawed by sectarianism and willing to throw it a sop in return for toleration, were remarkably lax in their conduct of public worship, not infrequently interjecting extemporaneous prayers, and in more instances than one gathering the offerings of the people by sending around a hat, as if to reward the preacher for his sermon, and then indifferently thrusting it *under* the Communion Table or behind the vestry-door.\* There was no rule, save that of personal inclination, as to the behavior of the congregation during the Baptismal, Confirmation, Marriage, and Burial services, and the majority remained seated throughout as mere onlookers at a spectacle in which they had no part. All this the Bishop succeeded in banishing, persistently urging uniformity and reasonable ritual on the clergy and their congregations, and finally bringing about a dignified symbolism, impressive by its very simplicity to him that seeks to understand it. But almost invariably extravagant ritual and extreme dogmatism lived short lives. Rash attempts at boy-choirs in St. Wilfred's, Marion, and Trinity, Mobile, were laughed to an early grave, and it was not until December 5, 1880, in St. John's, Montgomery, that the first permanent vested boy-choir was organized in the diocese. Choral services were sporadic, met with small favor, and did not linger long. The exchange of surplice for preaching-gown and black gloves, in honor of the sermon, was a harmless

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\* Bishop Wilmer's Convention Address for 1871, page 44.



bit of Evangelical ritual that also died long ago, but in Mobile the black gown is still used at funerals.

But while theological and ritual controversy were happily absent the clergy succeeded, with the unselfish assistance of the many lawyers in attendance upon Councils, in improving themselves in dialectics by perennially offering and opposing amendments to the diocesan Constitution and Canons, and by periodically hauling the entire system over the coals of revision. At irregular intervals the canons were amended into irreconcilable confusion, and committees were appointed to harmonize them by preparing a new set. These were, as a rule, hastily prepared, unanimously adopted, and continually amended. By good fortune, small attendance at Councils, and economy in distributing the Journals, comparatively few knew much about the law department of the diocese ; and the Church did her work as well as if she had no canons, and lived as healthily as do all bodies that are unconscious that they have such a thing as a constitution.

Some diocesan legislation was very interesting. In 1867 deacons could sit and speak in Council, but not until 1876 were they allowed to vote. In 1868, and again in 1874, the deputies to the General Convention were instructed to urge that body to set forth an authorized translation of the Nicene Creed for use in churches, the *Filioque* to be omitted as an interpolation without ecumenical authority, however true the doctrine. As early as 1869 it was required that delegates to the diocesan Convention should be communi-



cants,\* but not till 1891 was a like restriction adopted as to vestrymen. In 1871 the Convention refused, on motion of the Rev. Dr. Fulton, to ratify a proposed amendment to the Constitution of the national Church, which provided that new dioceses could not be organized until they had satisfied the General Convention that they had a sufficient endowment fund to support the Bishop. In 1886 the name "Convention," by which the diocesan legislature had been known, was laid aside as having political connotations, and in its stead was resumed the more ecclesiastical title "Council," which had been borne during the Civil War. In the same year the Council memorialized the General Convention on the subject of lay-readers, urging that they should be at least twenty-three years old, that they should be required to begin the service at the Lord's Prayer, and that they should be instructed to wear, as the canonical dress of lay-readers, "a short surplice worn over a cassock, without any stole or other ecclesiastical vestment or ornament."† About

\* When the vote was taken and the result announced, two unconfirmed delegates arose and took formal and indignant leave of the Convention. They were both back again the following year—*confirmed*.

† The whole is wiser than any of its parts, and this memorial, which was adapted from a similar memorial presented in the same year by the Missionary Jurisdiction of Colorado, brought about no change in the existing canon. Twelve years before, in 1874, Bishop Bedell, of Ohio, wrote to a young candidate for Holy Orders, who was desirous to wear a chorister's cassock and cotta when officiating as lay-reader: "As to your request to wear a 'cotta': I am much obliged by your description of it. But it is evidently a garment not knowu

the same time the dignity of the Episcopate received additional safeguard, without diminution of its influence, by a provision that the Bishop should not participate in any debate in the Council, but should have the privilege of delivering his sentiments upon the matter debated immediately before putting the question.

This last mentioned action of the Council was in line with the uniform respect with which the Church in Alabama has ever treated its Bishops. No attempt has ever been consciously made to abridge the Episcopal power, or to usurp any of its prerogatives.\* Its Bishops have never been deemed infallible, and clergymen and laymen alike have dared differ from them on matters both of discipline and doctrine, of opinion and of dogma, but they have been regarded as possessing inalienable rights and as having exceptional mental and spiritual gifts. In 1871 some diocesan Churchmen would fain have erected the Bishop into a third branch of the Council, with legislative

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to our Church. The House of Bishops, in Bishop White's day, described the garments clerical to be 'the gown, the bands, and the surplice,' and expressly forbade candidates for the ministry to wear either. I cannot give you permission to wear either of those; nor can I allow you to wear a garment not known to the Church, in the diocese of Ohio."

\* This has been largely due to the fact that there has been no straining of the Episcopal authority. Bishop Wilmer has often said, concerning propositions to confer greater canonical power on the Episcopate, that such action would be unwise; that if a Bishop is the right man he has already more power than he wants; if he is a weak man he cannot have too little.

powers co-ordinate with those of the clergy and the laity; but Dr. Fulton succeeded in having the matter referred to a committee, which, *it was hoped*, the General Convention would some day appoint to take all such grave constitutional measures into consideration. Twenty years after a more zealous clergyman pursued this proposition to its logical outcome by suggesting that all diocesan legislation be left "where it properly belongs—in the hands of the Bishop;" but the Council was unable to receive the proposition seriously.

## CHAPTER XV.

### AARON'S SONS AND HUR'S.

IT is not the acts alone that interest us most in a study of the past. We desire to learn somewhat of the actors. We want to feel the pulse of personality, and know that the things of which we read were done by men of flesh and blood, neither superhuman nor marionetic, but of like passions with ourselves.

Some there are who feel this necessity, but can yield to it only in part. To their vision one vast character—a Lincoln, a Napoleon, a Washington, a Cæsar—fills the canvass, and all others are but pygmies. Yet, in truth, it were less wise to exalt a leader by speaking lightly of his subordinates than to elevate him by exalting his subordinates; for the general will always be above his lieutenants.

These remarks have pointed application in the past conditions of the Church in Alabama. We should be led to infer from much that has been written that only two strong mental and spiritual forces have appeared in the entire history of the diocese—Bishop Cobbs and Bishop Wilmer. Yet as in the first episcopate, so in the second there were other strong personalities—lesser lights, it is true, yet of great mass and independent power. Hanson, Cushman, Massey, Pierce, Beckwith, Stickney, and Nevius, of the clergy, and White, Bunker, Taylor, Ross, S. G. Jones, Pollard, and Bryce, of the laity, belonged to both regimes.

The work of Stickney, Banister, R. H. Cobbs, Beard, Hunt, Stringfellow, Fulton, Drysdale, Everhart, Johnston, and the Tuckers (besides others previously mentioned), lies within Bishop Wilmer's episcopate; as does also the ecclesiastical activity of Lefebvre, Buell, Bond, and Dawson, of the departed, and a score of prominent Church-workers now living. These men were not lay-figures, but were living, breathing, human beings, some knowledge of whose personality will add to our interest in their times.

Francis R. Hanson was a typical clergyman of the the old school. A conservative Churchman, the title "Father," which affection bestowed on him in his old age, was not indicative of his theological views. Quiet and undemonstrative, he refrained alike from ordinary marks of affection and from emotional manifestation of religious feeling. Yet these suppressed emotions were overpowering forces in the determination of his actions. Shortly after ordination to the priesthood he felt impelled to offer himself for the foreign mission field. He was accepted, and sent to China. There hard and bitter and humiliating experience taught him that emotion had led him into misunderstanding the voice of God. He had no aptitude for missionary work among the heathen, and he was entirely lacking in ability to learn a foreign language. He had been loving enough to be mastered by emotion; he was now sensible enough to understand what God said to him through the voice of his limitations; and he came back home. His life work was done in Alabama. For forty-one years he labored within a

radius of twenty-five miles, being rector of St. John's-in-the-Prairies, St. Andrews', Macon, and Trinity, Demopolis, from 1839 to 1873. Shortly after the close of civil war he made a tour through some of the Northern dioceses to solicit funds to rebuild the then ruined church at Demopolis. During this tour the rectorship of a beautiful church was offered him. The support was comfortable, the surroundings were attractive, and he was growing old and infirm. He instantly declined the call, and when pressed for his reason responded: "The people of Alabama shared with me their prosperity, and now I will share with them their adversity."

Horace Stringfellow, D. D., rector of St. John's Church, Montgomery, was the most prominent clergyman of Bishop Wilmer's entire episcopate. He was made deacon by Bishop Whittingham and priest by Bishop Meade. His earliest ministry was spent in Virginia. At first his father, himself a clergyman of note, was distressed at the increasing elevation of his son's Churchmanship, but subsequently became reconciled to it when he saw that his son was not bound to the "Harlot of the Seven Hills." Both before and after the civil war he was rector of Grace Church, Indianapolis, and during his second incumbency built St. Paul's Cathedral at a cost of one hundred thousand dollars, superintending, as was his wont, the minutest details even of brick-laying and stone-cutting. He came to Alabama and St. John's in 1870 at Bishop Wilmer's urgent solicitation. From the first the soundness of his judgment and the strength of his



will set him apart from the multitude. His strong convictions and unyielding temper were detrimental to his popularity among chance acquaintances, while his absent-mindedness and great stature, combining to make him overlook those whom he met, were instrumental in wounding much self-esteem. But all yielded to him the honor due remarkable energy and ability, and those who knew him best admired and loved him most.

A strong but not extreme Churchman, his energy was not absorbed by ecclesiastical activities, but went out into active works of mercy and morality. At one time he stirred the community so deeply on the subject of a proposed cock-pit to be held at the State Fair that the management were but too glad to strike the brutalizing exhibit from their list of attractions. At another time when all combined action had failed he personally undertook first the building and later on the rehabilitation of the Infirmary, an institution sorely needed in Montgomery, and he succeeded in so interesting a few gentlemen, notably Ignatius Pollak, that money was forthcoming to pay all expenses until brighter days came. At social gatherings he bubbled over with spontaneous cheerfulness. True, he sometimes invited a friend to breakfast, but forgot the invitation and cheerfully entertained his hungry guest in the library whither he himself had repaired after an early meal ; but after a time men learned to overlook such small matters as these, excused themselves after a brief visit, and hied them to some restaurant for bodily refreshment. In 1874, knowing that well nigh

every delegate to the Convention, which was to meet in Eufaula, must pass through Montgomery and remain several hours, Dr. Stringfellow wrote a separate note to each clerical and lay delegate asking him to luncheon on the day before Council. Each supposed that only he was thus remembered, but when the rectory was reached late comers found the parlors filled and almost the entire Convention present. The women of the parish were there in force, and saw to it that the luncheon was comfortably despatched and that the Convention left the house in time to catch the afternoon train for Eufaula.

Under Dr. Stringfellow's rectorship St. John's Church was greatly enlarged and beautified. Under his immediate supervision, the new Christ Church, Tuskalooza, and the Church of the Holy Comforter, Montgomery, were built; while he was interested in the building and furnishing of other churches in smaller towns. His fields of action were so many, and his energy was so intense and unrelaxing, that all he asked of his congregation was, that they stand aside and let him do the work. He would have no parochial societies; he abhorred Easter Monday congregational meetings and discouraged attendance at them; and he gave the vestry to do only what it was physically impossible to do himself. His counsels controlled the diocesan Councils for at least a decade. In later years he was generally chairman of the Committee on Canons; he was a member of the Standing Committee eight years; and he was a deputy to the

General Convention, first from Indiana and then from Alabama, twenty-seven years. He died in 1893.

Dr. John Fulton remained in Alabama only six years, coming from Georgia in 1869 and going to Indiana in 1874, but in that brief period he made a lasting impress of his personality upon the diocese. Already he was known as a canonist of great learning, and his reputation was enhanced by the publication of his *Index Canonum* in 1872, while he was rector of Christ Church, Mobile. His views were based on accurate information and were clear and comprehensive, and his expression of them was marked by strict logical progression. He was always chairman of the Committee on Canons, member of the Standing Committee, and deputy to the General Convention. Abstract propositions did not exhaust his energies, nor did national and diocesan questions prevent him from guarding zealously the interests of his parish. Christ Church was a wealthy parish in those days, and paid its rector a salary of \$4,500. Dr. Fulton was just thirty-five years old when he came to Alabama; he was endowed to a rare degree with a personal magnetism that worked wonders upon pastoral burdens; his gift for extemporaneous speaking was extraordinary, and out of the full store of his ready mind the thought of a half hour extracted the material for a discourse brilliant and profound. The man was a clear-headed worker, the parish was a fertile field, and the harvest was plenteous. The Sunday congregations crowded the church, the yearly confirmations averaged twenty-five, and the annual income ranged

from fifteen to twenty-five thousand dollars. In this rectorship the parish debt was paid, and several thousand dollars given to the Church Home for Girls.

Of the laymen who passed to their reward in the first decade of Bishop Wilmer's episcopate, one of the most earnest was Prof. Hubert P. Lefebvre, who had succeeded the Rev. J. Avery Shepherd, as principal of Hamner Hall, Montgomery. Professor Lefebvre lived only four years after coming to Alabama in 1869, but those were years of good works and rapid development into a Church helper. Despite the unfavorable circumstances under which he assumed the management of Hamner Hall, the school enrolled thirty boarding pupils and one hundred day pupils in the first year of his incumbency. Apart from his efficiency as a teacher he possessed unusual aptitude for parochial work. Under his superintendency the Sunday-school of St. John's attained an unusual degree of prosperity, and contributed largely to the support of the Bishop Cobbs Home for Orphans. He was chiefly instrumental in organizing and energizing the "Young Men's Episcopal Association" of Montgomery, like the Mobile Brotherhood of the Church, a local forerunner of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew. This Association established and supported the parochial school, wherein eighty children of the poor received free tuition and, in many cases, free clothing. In addition to these undertakings, Professor Lefebvre was beginning to take a lively interest in matters diocesan and was imparting his fire to others, when his work ceased.

David Buell was another layman of great intelligence, weight of character, zeal of service, and liberality of purse. A lawyer of prominence he was for many years the mainstay of St. Thomas' Church, Greenville. The practice in public speaking which he obtained at the bar rendered him exceptionally able in the chancel. Under his lay-readership the congregation, instead of decreasing, as is ordinarily the case under lay-ministration in an organized parish, increased steadily throughout his many months of continuous service, and not without regret consented to receive once more ministrations from a resident priest.

But the list grows of those into whose labors the present generation has entered, and our limits preclude further extension of the roll. Yet six men must be named, in passing, to ignore whom were to ignore six of the strongest pillars of the diocese : Joel White, modest, retiring, serving in the diocesan Convention of 1834 and thenceforward to the Council of 1896, first from Tuskaloosa, then from Montgomery, and a deputy to the General Conventions of 1835, 1871, 1877, 1880, and 1892, the host of every prominent man in the state for the last two generations ; James Bond, the mainspring of St. John's, Mobile, Chancellor of the diocese, or legal adviser of the Bishop, member of the Standing Committee and of the Committee on Canons, and deputy to the General Convention ; Samuel G. Jones, a foundation stone of Hamner Hall and of the original Church of the Holy Comforter, Montgomery ; N. H. R. Dawson, who in the twenty-six years in which he was treasurer of

the Bishop's Fund brought the wreckage of that fund to thirty-five thousand dollars ; and Alexander R. Bell, and Charles T. Pollard, quiet and unassuming, perfect types of the Christian gentleman.

To such clergymen and laymen does the Church in Alabama owe its present spiritual, theological, and financial ability to ride out the storms and distresses that assail it from time to time.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### PROSPECTIVE.

THE author has now completed the undertaking which he proposed to himself of writing a history of the Church in Alabama from the earliest times down to the close of the undivided episcopate of Bishop Wilmer; but he cannot lay down the pen without briefly declaring present conditions and forecasting the lines of future development.

The present condition, then, is this: The Orphan's Home at Mobile has completed its endowment of \$36,000,\* and no longer appeals to the Church for assistance. The Bishop's Fund has increased to \$38,000, and by the sale of lands in the near future will reach the limit of \$50,000, when the necessity for assessments on parishes will be obviated and the Church will be free to give more generously to missionary development.†

The endowment of the Society for the Relief of Disabled Clergy and the Widows and Orphans of Deceased Clergy, after being laboriously brought by Christmas offerings and annual dues to well-nigh \$20,000, was

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\* The Bishop was compelled early in the present year (1898) to expend \$4,000 of the \$40,000 endowment in purchasing property, known as the "Widows' Row," adjoining the Church Home for Girls.

† Councils and Finance Committees have for many years wrestled with the question: What portion of the income from

largely sacrificed to political apprehension, in 1896, by the forced sale of Alabama bonds and the re-investment of the proceeds in lower grade of securities, whose value is as yet indeterminate; and the work of the past ten years must again be undertaken. The Diocesan Missionary Society, without any endowment, dependent entirely on free-will-offerings from month to month, is supporting in part sixteen missionaries, who are ministering to eighty congregations.

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the Bishop's Fund can properly be appropriated in any year to supplement the assessments laid upon parishes? It has been asserted that one-third of the income can thus be used, and this proposition is determined upon on the supposition that one-third of the whole amount saved after the War of Secession belonged to the "Special Fund" [for which see p. 89]. That this assertion has no foundation is evident from these two forgotten facts:

1. During the War the two funds were confused, and no separation of them was subsequently made. [Compare Journals: 1862, p. 24; 1863, p. 75; 1864, p. 27.]

2. The division now accepted was made in 1869 by new Trustees—N. H. R. Dawson, George O. Baker, and A. G. Mabry—on a purely arbitrary basis; and these Trustees say "they have no means of distinguishing the notes belonging to these two funds." [See Journals: 1868, pp. 31 and 34; 1869, pp. 36 and 37.]

Hence all subsequent citation of this report is simply to use a guess as basis for an argument. How wide of the mark the guess probably is may be estimated from the fact that while in 1863 the Permanent Fund was \$4,459 and the Special Fund \$23,561, the 1869 Trustees assigned a nominal value of only \$8,225 to the Special Fund and a value of \$16,499 to the Permanent Fund.

Only one principle can be appealed to hereafter in the use

Forty-two lay-readers are attempting to supply the serious breach in the Apostolic ministry caused by the practical obsolescence of the diaconate.

The lines of future development may be accurately forecasted by observation of the last two episcopates : The episcopate of Bishop Cobbs was the period of Experiment ; when it was tried what places would receive the Church and what would not. The undivided episcopate of Bishop Wilmer was the period of Adjustment ; when the necessity was, laid upon the Church to meet the constantly changing conditions brought about by the civil war, the panic of 1873, and the boom of 1885, and to transplant her parishes as her congregations were swept from country to village, and from village to city. Today with no panics, no booms in near prospect, but with surrounding forces that apparently ensure the permanence of present industrial conditions and their development along normal lines, it would seem that the period upon which we are now entering is to be the period of Aggression ; wherein the Church is to go out into the byways and waste-places of Alabama where her voice has never been heard, and to preach the Gospel where it has never been heard in its com-

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of the Bishop's Fund: It was intended to form an endowment of \$50,000 in order to free the parishes from taxation forever, *not to help them tide over a crisis.*

Careful examination of the statements of this note has been made by Mr. J. H. Fitts, Treasurer of the Diocese and of the Bishop's Fund, and he gives them his unqualified endorsement.

pleteness, and where zeal has so long been left untempered by knowledge.

The possibilities of such missionary aggression have been illustrated in the last few years by two noteworthy achievements—one in the agricultural regions and one in the mineral :

Along the Alabama river missionaries had been active, as we have seen, as early as 1855, and the result of a few years' work was the establishment of congregations at Claiborne, St. Stephen's, Camden, Bladon, Butler, and Pushmataha. For some years services had been conducted with greater or less frequency and regularity ; but there were long periods when no ministers could be secured, and many of the Church-folk removed elsewhere, while nearly all of those who remained left their first love and lost all interest in the Church. The land lay fallow an entire generation. At one place, indeed,—Camden—efforts were long made to keep the spark alive, and the Rev. F. B. Lee made it many visits. But month by month interest waned and congregations dwindled. At last one beautiful day Mr. Lee came and found that no provision had been made for services. He opened the church, swept and dusted it, built a fire in the stove, rang the bell, donned his surplice, and prepared to enter the chancel. But no one was at the church ; he waited some time, and no one came. In fact the congregation had unanimously remained at home ; and Mr. Lee thereafter followed their example. But in 1893 a new generation had grown up, many derelict Churchmen had become tired of the bitter-sweet of

sectarianism, and a new attempt was made. Mr. John G. Murray, whose active interest in the work of the Selma chapter of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew had energized his long suppressed intention to become a candidate for Holy Orders, undertook, while but a lay-reader, the work of breaking up the ground. In a short while he was ministering to seven newly established congregations, of which three—Mount Pleasant and Perdue Hill, in Monroe County, and Camden, in Wilcox County,—were on or near the Alabama River, and four—Martin's Station, Orrville, and Tyler's, in Dallas County, and Stanton in Chilton County,—were grouped about Selma. They were known as the "Alabama River Missions," but the Board of Missions was not called upon to help them until the re-formation of the field in 1896, caused by the removal of the Rev. Mr. Murray to Birmingham and the death of the Rev. F. B. Lee. Camden's old church, long the abode of bats and goats, was rebuilt. The old St. Luke's, Cahaba, was removed to Martin's Station. The dismantled building at Benton was sold, and the proceeds were used in the erection of a church at Tyler's.

The other noteworthy missionary achievement of the recent past is that of the Rev. T. J. Beard, D. D., in the mineral regions about Birmingham. After his most successful work in North Alabama in the 'Sixties, and a brief sojourn in Arkansas, Mr. Beard had been rector of St. John's, Mobile, eleven years, and of the Church of the Advent, Birmingham, fourteen years. In 1896 he resigned the latter charge and returned to

the evangelistic work for which he was so admirably fitted. In a few months he had about solved the long-continuing problem: How to secure an Evangelist. With Bessemer, Woodlawn, and Avondale as a nucleus he proceeded to create a mission field. The many railways radiating from Birmingham gave him easy access to the mining camps and villages that had sprung up on hill-sides and in valleys like so many mushrooms. These villages grew like mushrooms, but with their iron roots it was plainly not theirs to die like mushrooms. Soon Dr. Beard was ministering at intervals of from a week to a month to eighteen congregations, generally visiting at least seven congregations every week. Adamsville, Brookside, Carbon Hill, Patton Mines, and Warrior, had never seen a clergyman of the Church, but already they have had baptisms and confirmations. Ashville, Blocton, Coalburg, Cullman, and Jasper, had long before fainted by the wayside, but these are all now receiving both spiritual and numerical edification.

In other portions of the diocese, too, successful attempts to establish missions are on foot. Notable among these is the Gulf Coast field. In the village of Bon Secour, all whose inhabitants are supported by fishing and oystering, only five or six families are not parishioners of St. Peter's. At Oak Grove, a mission established by the Mobile Brotherhood of St. Andrew, at Citronelle, at Navy Cove, at Magnolia, at Point Clear, and other places, has grown up a work not dreamed of ten years ago, not undertaken five years ago.



It may be truthfully affirmed that the development of the Church in Alabama is limited only by the faith, the energy, the persistence of its head, and its body—the Bishops, and the clergy and laity. Many congregations now forming will disappear and some of the old congregations will die out, as congregations have disappeared in the past, but many of the new and most of the old will live, while in none will the dissolution of the congregation mean, of necessity, the loss of the communicants.

Two fields call for early endeavor and promise a goodly harvest. Southeast Alabama is a virgin field, wherein Bishop never yet worked; it is rapidly increasing in population, as railroads push in from every side, and water power is developed. Northwest Alabama, south of the Tennessee River, is just opening her arms to the outside world. These two sections of the state are today the most inviting fields, and if their invitation shall soon be accepted the number of congregations in Alabama, which has increased fifty per cent. in five years, will at the end of the next five years have increased fifty per cent. on the present number.

In Alabama, as elsewhere, men are becoming tired of a theology that anathematizes because of a variant philosophy about revelation. They are beginning to rebel against a discipline that makes the voice of prejudice the voice of God, and that in rural districts punishes with excommunication that which, under the same pair of eyes, is condoned in the town or the city. They will welcome, if she come in her own glorious apparel, the religious Body that brings them the una-

dulterated facts of the Creed as the test of theological and ecclesiastical orthodoxy, and the glorious freedom of the sons of God as the rule of their daily walk and conversation.

It is for the Church to enter in and possess the land. There are giants to overcome; but so long as the Body is true to the Head there is no doubt as to the consummation.

THE END.

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